

# DIAZ CONTEMPORARY

## *With the Void*

Stephen Andrews, Pierre Dorion, Dara Gellman

14 July to 27 August 2011

Opening Thursday 14 July from 6 to 8

Diaz Contemporary is pleased to present a group show featuring work by three artists: Stephen Andrews, Pierre Dorion, and Dara Gellman.

Stephen Andrews uses various media to explore tensions between imagery and memory, the machine and the handmade, and the personal and the political. He is known for paintings and drawings that play with the aesthetic characteristics produced by photographic technology, elaborating upon and unraveling the processes and paradigms of technologically produced images, imbuing them with the aura and history of the handmade. His work oscillates between the representational and the abstract, often lingering in the productive space between these two categories. The works included in this show are examples of Andrews' ventures into this realm of the unknown, guided by chance and intuition as much as by research.

Pierre Dorion's practice also has included explorations of both the figurative and the abstract, and of the use of photography as a tool. Working from photographs of his surroundings: observations of the urban landscape, domestic spaces, and architectural details, Dorion produces paintings that act as both a narrative and as a kind of meditation on imagery, perception and depiction of reality. His recent paintings lean further towards this elusiveness, avoiding certain details and references to reality while still depicting real space.

Dara Gellman's video installations inspire a related conversation about representation and imagery through technology, exploring the questions of real versus imagined space, the boundary of the screen (or canvas), and the viewer/image relationship. Guided by an interest in the appropriation of existing but ambiguous images, histories and narratives, Gellman repositions these sensory experiences to call into question our ideas about object and subject, ground and form, truth and experience.

To bring these differing practices into one room highlights a resonance among them, both aesthetically and conceptually. A fruitful dialogue is formed, but not resolved. Perhaps the strongest common thread is an interest in a liminal space, where categories resist application, and experience resists language.

In 1958, Albert Camus famously wrote in the guest book at a show of Yves Klein: "Avec le vide, les pleins pouvoirs" (with the void, full powers). The void he refers to in Klein's work could be said to have more to do with the ephemeral (the show in question, in fact, involved an empty gallery) while here we are struck rather by rich materiality, but at the same time, the phrase beautifully summarizes the occasional importance of that which is not shown.

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With these three artists we see an exploration of the potential of abstraction, of amorphousness over specificity, and of imagery void of clear meaning. The artists create space for the viewer's thoughts, perhaps emphasizing how much of the viewing process occurs on the receiving end. The positioning of painting alongside video also creates a noteworthy tension. There is much to ponder in terms of understandings of representation, its traditions, and its contemporary cultural significance. One could argue that the contemporary eye has been radically transformed by image-making technology, and that painting is influenced by these images just as video and photography have been influenced by painting. Our understanding of meaning in imagery is enriched and complicated by the expanded field of art and media.

- Colleen O'Reilly

**Stephen Andrews** is based in Toronto. Over the last twenty-five years he has exhibited his work in Canada, the U.S., Brazil, Scotland, France and Japan. He is represented in the collections of the National Gallery of Canada, the Art Gallery of Ontario, the Belkin Art Gallery, the Schwartz Collection, Harvard as well as many private collections. Recent solo exhibitions include *Stephen Andrews* at the Illingworth Kerr Gallery in Calgary, and *A Small Part of Something Larger* at Paul Petro Contemporary Art in Toronto. He is represented by Paul Petro Contemporary Art.

**Pierre Dorion** is based in Montreal. He has exhibited widely in Canada and abroad, and is represented in numerous collections such as the Musée des beaux-arts de Montréal, the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, and the National Gallery of Canada. He was recently featured in a solo exhibition entitled *Pierre Dorion: peinture et photographie* at the Musée des beaux-arts de Montréal. He is represented by Diaz Contemporary in Toronto, Galerie René Blouin in Montreal, and by Jack Shainman Gallery in New York.

**Dara Gellman** is based in Toronto. Her video and installation works have been presented across Canada and internationally in over 80 exhibitions and screenings. Dara completed her Master of Visual Studies at the University of Toronto in 2008, and was recently a Banff New Media Institute Liminal Screen co-production resident. Her print work was featured in a limited edition print in the journal *Interfaces: Image, Text, Language* co-published by the Université Paris 7 and College of the Holy Cross.