

DIAZ CONTEMPORARY

Chris Curreri

Handle

4 April to 9 May

Diaz Contemporary is pleased to present the work of Chris Curreri. Curreri's photo-based practice takes the form of looping film projections and photographic suites. His work focuses on the idea of transformation, where the "decisive moment" of the photograph is in some way extended, or the fixed identity of an object is elaborated upon. A given entity – a found photograph, a ready-made object, or a cultural product – often becomes subject to performance. Curreri's work points to the idea that ideas themselves are malleable and that it is we, in our actions, who determine our relationship to things.

Curreri's exhibition consists of two suites of photographs, *Puppet* and *Handle*. The photographs that comprise *Puppet* record a naked man's contorted poses around a single red vase. When compared with the body, the vase appears as a complete form – fixed in its shape, symmetrical and unmoving. The man's contortions become an attempt to define his relationship to the unchanging, impassive vase. As a result of these forced interactions the vase assumes multiple roles: that of a potty, an object of worship, a stump of an amputee. In *Handle*, a selection of red glass vases is photographed as they are held and prodded by a human hand. A dialogue between animate and inanimate forms is created as the hands press against the rigid glass. A kind of perversion occurs, and the openings, already somewhat akin to the human body, become more obviously personified orifices.

Throughout this exhibition the vase acts as a placeholder, an empty thing that awaits direction and redefinition. This alludes to a human capacity to redefine relationships to rules and identities that seem fixed. *Queer*, a term that gained wide use in the 1990s, is used to define identities, not in terms of essence, but in terms of their relationship to mainstream notions of identity. Likewise, in these works, objects in the world are defined not by any intrinsic property or value, but by the function or relationship that is established with them.

Toronto-based Chris Curreri is a graduate of Bard College's MFA Program, and completed a BFA in Photography Studies at Ryerson University. Recent exhibitions include: *Circa 1960* at Gallery 44 in Toronto, ON; *Bicycle Race* at Language Plus in Alma, QC; and *Perceptions and their Arousal* at Agnes Etherington Art Center in Kingston, ON. Recent film screenings include: Image Forum Festival, Japan; Festival Internacional de Cine de Mar del Plata, Argentina; and the Toronto International Film Festival, Canada.

The artist gratefully acknowledges the support of the Ontario Arts Council and the Toronto Arts Council.