

# Many Fires

John G. Boehme, Bruno Billio, Josh Bonnetta, Jennifer McMackon, Annie MacDonell

Curated by Carmen Victor and Jacob Korczynski  
2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Curated Exhibition  
13<sup>th</sup> Annual Junction Arts Festival 2005  
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The 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Junction Arts Festival is pleased to host its 2<sup>nd</sup> Curated Exhibition which brings provocative contemporary art to the street. The exhibition entitled *Many Fires* takes its name from an excerpt from Jane Jacobs' book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961). Jane Jacobs is an iconic community activist and she has contributed significantly to the way we think about urban space and planning.

Following the success of the inaugural Curated Exhibition, *Many Fires* features work by emerging and established Canadian artists who have exhibited locally, nationally and internationally.

Many thanks to the curators, Carmen Victor and Jacob Korczynski, and this year's major sponsor, the Junction Business Improvement Area.

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The photographs present snapshots of abandoned rest stops, a byproduct of urban sprawl, taken during the artist's explorations across Europe and North America. Allowing viewers to consciously measure the landscape of the photographs against the Junction site, McMackon's *Now and Next Minute Reversal Photographs* raise questions concerning viewers' sense of place and their relationship to the neighbourhood. The *Now and Next Minute Reversal Photographs* denote the landscape as cultural construct and its doppelgänger. Not only do McMackon's photographs comment on the effects of gentrification, they also imply varied meaning infused by the use of multiple, doubled, perspectives.

Jennifer McMackon's series of videos entitled *Thrill Rides* (2003) are an anthology of short vignettes each documenting a complete cycle on different amusement park rides. *Thrill Rides* furthers McMackon's examination of the landscape as a technologically mediated construct. A hyper-industrialized amusement park ride, like the broader Junction Arts Festival itself, acts as a temporary spectacle. It is adhered to an existing site, radically reconfiguring one's spatial and temporal relationship to the landscape in which it is situated.

Bruno Billio generates sculptural installation from found objects and his own family heirlooms in a manner that evokes an unsettling paranormal

visitation. Purposeful, yet uncanny, the intervention of visual order disrupts the perception of the common objects used. By recontextualizing personal and found objects, these items basically disrupt the banality of their original function and transmute into sculpture. This allows viewers to consider the distinctions between artist intervention and the inadvertent placement of objects within a space.

Bruno Billio's sculptural installation confuses the role of the object through the visual density of the materials used.<sup>2</sup> Drawing upon his own history with many of the objects, Billio retains an intimate relationship with the ephemera he uses to construct the work. In this way, Billio's work and any reading of it is determined by its site-specific configuration. Installed within an urban reclamation company, Billio's arrangement investigates distinctions between space, site and installation. Meanwhile, the artist's overt baroque tendencies are laid bare.

Working in the framework of moving images, Josh Bonnetta responds to broader questions of image making and memory by removing film from the context of narrative linear projection. Bonnetta's installation-based work draws upon the intersection between the found and the familiar, recontextualizing both family photos and found footage. Bonnetta's montage seeks not to deal with a history rooted in the sequential meaning of cinema, but rather a multiplication of images which spill outside of the single frame.

Josh Bonnetta investigates the cinematic experience using film, photography and chemistry which both adheres and undoes the photographed image as source material.<sup>3</sup> The notion that the moving image always transforms the space it occupies is both embraced and exploded by Bonnetta, who instead of addressing the conventionality of the moving image, deconstructs it and halts the flow of filmic frames in order to reveal a cinematic experience unfettered by the apparatus of the projector.

Annie MacDonell purchased a box of negatives at a pawnshop which date back to 1953 from which she distilled both of the works in the exhibition. Through the interpretation of the temporal and spatial concerns of the still and moving photographed image, Annie MacDonnell's *1953* (2004) and *Time Is a One Trick Pony* (2001) invert the sequencing of images normally presented to the viewer with a predetermined duration.<sup>4</sup>

MacDonell's rotating slide projection entitled *1953* depicts a woman removing her clothes in a softly darkened room and brings to the foreground the public display of private behaviours. Here the



Jennifer McMackon, *Mohawk, Now and Next Minute Reversal Photographs*, ink jet on plastic, 2003



Jennifer McMackon, *Thrill Rides #2*, video still, 2003



Bruno Billio, *Pony*, mixed media, 2005