



MAUREEN ANDERSON *Object of Desire*, 2005, looped video, sizes variable

Maureen Anderson Object of Desire

MAUREEN ANDERSON was born in 1977 and received her MFA in Public Art in 2006 from Bauhaus University, Weimar, Germany. She works in many media including performance, painting, photography, and writing as ways to explore human identity. She has exhibited in New York and Germany, and is currently living in South Korea.

MAUREEN ANDERSON's video installation is composed of over 1,800 mug shots of people wanted on drug charges by the Florida Department of Corrections. At present in the U.S., there are more than 2 million people incarcerated many of them on minor drug charges. In many ways, this criminal activity is the product of its own solution: as the justice system becomes more and more a part of the market economy, it needs to incarcerate more and more people. Anderson's looped video portraits give faces to some of this anonymous mass of forgotten individuals.

Andrew Danson Danushevsky is a Halifax photo-based artist, curator, educator and musician who lived most of his life in Toronto. He has published two monologues of his portraits and curated Canadian photography exhibitions in Prague, Berlin and Havana. He has twice been invited to photograph in China by the Chinese Photographers Association and is in production of a China-based photographic body of work entitled *Ancestral Observation*. He is currently exhibiting *i love you woman* at G+ Galleries with upcoming shows at James North Studio in Hamilton, Studio 22 in Kingston and Studio 21 in Halifax.

Richard Hines was born and raised in Windsor, Ontario. He has earned a MFA from NSCAD University in Halifax, a BFA from the University of Manitoba, and a BA from the University of Winnipeg. He teaches at NSCAD University and Mount Allison University in Sackville, NB. His work has been published and exhibited in Canada and the U.S. and can be seen at upcoming exhibitions at the Beaverbrook Gallery in Fredericton and Platform in Winnipeg. His work is represented by Patrick Mikhail Gallery in Ottawa and Michael Gibson Gallery in London, ON.

Nicole Raufeisen and **Ryan Witt** have worked collaboratively since 2002 and are graduates of Simon Fraser University in Vancouver. Their interdisciplinary practice has been exhibited locally, nationally, and internationally. Recent activities include a solo exhibition at the Or gallery in Vancouver and residencies at both the Bemis Centre for Contemporary Art in Omaha, Nebraska and the Drake Hotel in Toronto. Currently, they are represented by the Republic Gallery.

COVER
NICOLE RAUFEISEN and RYAN WITT
Shed from the series *Defenders of the Faith*, 2005, single channel video, dimensions variable



RICHARD HINES
Shelter from the series *Pictures from (Inside)*, 2005, Chromogenic print, 101 x 119 cm.



Richard Hines Nicole Raufeisen and Ryan Witt

Performing Home

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Performing Home

by Andrew Danson Danushevsky

In *Performing Home*, Gallery 44 presents two series of works, *Pictures from (Inside)*, photographs by Richard Hines, and *Defenders of the Faith*, video works by Nicole Raufeisen and Ryan Witt. Both series of works result from a pensive energy that the artists have channeled into their pieces.

Superficially, the work of these artists appears to have disparate connections. However, if one decelerates and looks at the quest for identity in our relentlessly quickening urban life, then *Pictures from (Inside)* and *Defenders of the Faith* possess harmonic resonance.

Roland Barthes suggests that "myth is constituted by the loss of the historical quality of things"¹ and Nicole and Ryan's mutations into unicorns from a deserted house in British Columbia, which looks like a sanitized crime-scene that cries for our loss of hope, dreams and inner consciousness.²

Richard Hines says that his family photographs speak to "...our longing to see the remnants of our lives."³ Family baggage carries complex remnants that constructs the intriguing unit of individuals called family, and *Pictures from (Inside)* opens that baggage to reveal its contents. In *The Diviners* Margaret Laurence declares, "I keep the snapshots not for what they show but what is



RICHARD HINES
Chess from the series *Pictures from (Inside)*, 2005.
Chromogenic print, 101 x 119 cm.

hidden in them."⁴ *Pictures from (Inside)* is hardly a collection of snapshots, but there is a good deal hidden within the images.

Pictures from (Inside) and *Defenders of the Faith* are both motivated by their creators' quest for place and harmony on the planet where technology has removed people from the natural world. Aren't many of us looking for balance as we consume ourselves?

Hines' photographs track his passionate desire to overcome loneliness within his family relationship and bond within this little collective of partner and mother of — not his real son. And what does it mean, not his *real* son? Are not flesh and blood the markers of real? Many of us who are stepparents understand the complexity and potential minefield of this ultra-sensitive parenting responsibility. What is real is the existing dynamic in the often-maligned role of 'step.' Richard Hines understands this and *Pictures from (Inside)* is an intimate expression of his attempt to define himself within his family and with his son.

Most males who have experienced a baby and young child in family life share the position of frequently putting themselves second to the mother-child relationship and the needs of the child. In the case of a stepchild awareness to this

of Art, NYC). The unicorn's horn was believed to be able to cure many illnesses and neutralize poison.

3 Conversation with Richard Hines, Halifax. Dec. 2006.

4 Margaret Laurence, *The Diviners* (Toronto: ECW Press, 1993), p. 12.

circumstance, it is often cranked up. Hines has conceived *Pictures from (Inside)* with this consciousness as well as other staged psychological scripts, yet those staged moments are 'out of control' because nuance is mainly uncontrollable. What do we really see in those fractioned moments before the shutter snares a scrap of time?

A different style of self-definition finds Nicole and Ryan in their constructed family milieu playing house as they display both acts of cleanliness and destruction performed in their abandoned dwelling between the urban centres of Langley and Surrey, British Columbia. Do we not simultaneously cleanse and destroy the planet?

It's challenging to take family photographs that transcend common snapshots, which are affixed to us like white bread and soft butter are to a child. Richard Hines in *Pictures from (Inside)* uses large chromogenic prints that present a modulated blend of clarity and ambiguity.

We find Hines physically on the edge in his photograph entitled *24 Degrees Celsius*. His son Jacob asleep in bed dominates the bottom right of the frame while he and his wife Claire at the top left of the frame are in close embrace. While Hines is out of the image's frame, he is not out of the picture. It's a compelling image that tells the ubiquitous story of the change of pace between couples after their children have bedded down.

In a similar desire for connectedness Nicole and Ryan in *Defenders of the Faith*, state that "we are not necessarily interested in furthering the themes of absence, abandonment, and ultimately separation but rather in slipping through the documentary genre into more interesting ideas regarding domestic performance, transformation, and spatial memory."⁵ *Defenders of the Faith* extracts a finger from the dike. Their setting is abandoned and so are many of the values that sustain life around them. The search for the unicorn is a search for elusive purity.

The unicorn's representation of purity, hope and transformation throughout the short non-linear video clips in *Defenders of the Faith* is also observed in Nicole and Ryan's clever editing that transports the viewer back and begs the question "do we really understand what is unfolding on the planet?" Ritualistic gestures that incorporate the use of party hats, horns and other small items as filtering devices call to the viewer for change — to listen — to rethink. These gestures quietly plead to a larger audience to consider *what is actually happening in the real world* beyond the myopic comfort zone of 'the culture of consumption' that unconsciously conspires against sustainable transformation.

Richard Hines' feelings of partial abandonment is an interior setting, but unlike the unicorn in *Defenders of the Faith* he is seeking a salvation in his role as male, partner and father.

5 Nicole Raufeisen and Ryan Witt letter to Andrew Danson Danushevsky, Dec. 2006.



NICOLE RAUFEISEN and RYAN WITT
Bedroom from the series *Defenders of the Faith*, 2005.
single channel video, dimensions variable

Quite differently in their subtexts, Nicole and Ryan are attempting to draw a relationship between the occupation of space by the viewer in the pervasive use of photography and that of urban redevelopment. It's an unusual premise. *Defenders of the Faith* carefully constructs a performance about a unicorn and domestic space as they "perform the same purifying or transformative function that photography does in relation to the indexical documentation of (usually domestic) space."⁶

Pictures from (Inside), far beyond a simplistic family landscape, contain rituals (family documentation) and hopes for transformation as Hines exposes his desire to navigate his identity. Hines deftly captures transient family moments revealing the ephemeral within the everyday.

In this age of technological domination and environmental/spiritual deterioration *Defenders of the Faith* resonates with a warning about the abandonment of constructive change and the urgent issues surrounding poison and purity. *Pictures from (Inside)* and *Defenders of the Faith* invite the viewer into diverse considerations about balance, harmony and the comfort zone. ■

6 Ibid.

1 Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, selected and translated from the French by Annette Lavers (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972), pp. 142-143. Excerpt from chapter *Myth Today*.

2 The legends of the unicorn date back to Chinese writings around 2800 BC, however the focus here on Christian themes of purity (the virgin), hope and transformation, centre on the medieval legends of the Hunt for the Unicorn (Tapestries at the Metropolitan Museum