



Lynda Gammon
Interval

May 16th - June 21st, 2008
Reception: Friday, May 16th, 8pm
(for members and invited guests only)

Note...

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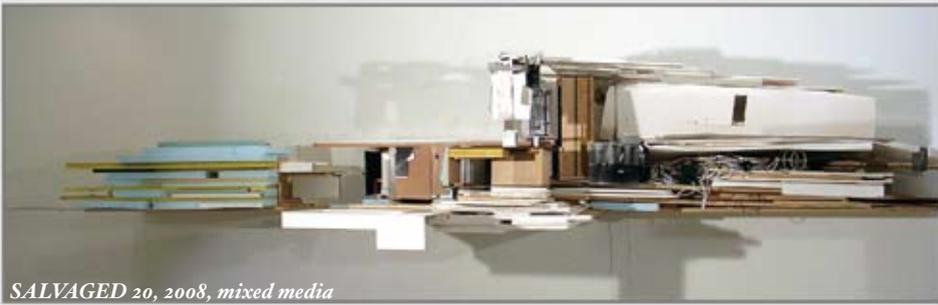
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SENSIBLE HISTORY *Lynda Gammon's INTERVAL. SALVAGED 20 and SALVAGED 21*



detail

SALVAGED 20, 2008, mixed media

by *Trudi Lynn Smith*

If memory could be made into a tactile, sensuous, physical object, what would it look like? It might look like a photograph. One might even go as far to say that it would look like a photograph folded and refolded, bent upon itself, cut, layered, and then folded again. In the process of folding, one could imagine that certain details in the photograph would make up the visible exterior, while other details would be hidden deep in the folds. This process can be likened to the way in which an event is remembered. In memory, people, places and senses rise to the surface of the mind, while other details are forgotten. In a failure to wholly memorize the past, one might find folds, and in the partial recall that is memory, one might find an exterior surface. This process of recalling and refolding produces an intricate and ever-changing terrain.

Photography is not only used as a metaphor to illustrate the process of memory, but individual photographs are often conflated and stand in for memory. After all, the invention of photography radically altered how we remember. Photographs are perceived to have the power to tell the truth about events, and are collected for this reason. Photographs have become prostheses to memory.

The place where this memory is accumulated, is the archive. An archive is a collection of moments compiled and constructed into an ordered sensible history—a kind of haunting ground for images. Archived photographs are fragments that bear witness to our inability to memorize a history (Foucault 2001). They form a record out of lived experience. Ranging from temperature-controlled government record facilities to eccentric personal collections, archives are the storehouses of memory, and of a collective and particular past.



detail

Lynda Gammon's ever-growing archive is made up of photographs of spaces and places that she has visited over the past decade. Beginning with black and white Polaroid images detailing interior spaces, including shelves, walls, lamps, windows, and doors, Gammon manipulates these images by re-photographing them, enlarging, darkening, cropping and cutting them in an effort to effectively recall those places that she herself bore witness. Drawing upon this archive and mixing it with building materials such as foamcore and cardboard, she produces new spaces. Made-up of photographs that have been folded, cut, and glued together into complex three-dimensional environments, the resulting aggregate works seem to reference architectural models.



Artist Biography:

Lynda Gammon studied at The University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, [B.A. English] and York University [M.F.A. 1983]. She has exhibited nationally and internationally and is currently an Associate Professor in the Visual Arts Department at the University of Victoria, teaching courses in Foundation Studies, Drawing, Photography, and Open Media.

Writer Biography:

Trudi Lynn Smith is an interdisciplinary PhD student in the Departments of Visual Art and Anthropology at University of Victoria, Canada. A practicing artist, curator, and social scientist, she has conducted image-based research in Jasper, Waterton Lakes, and Banff National Parks, investigating the relationship between images and national park landscapes. She is particularly interested in bringing together the methods of art practice and social research.

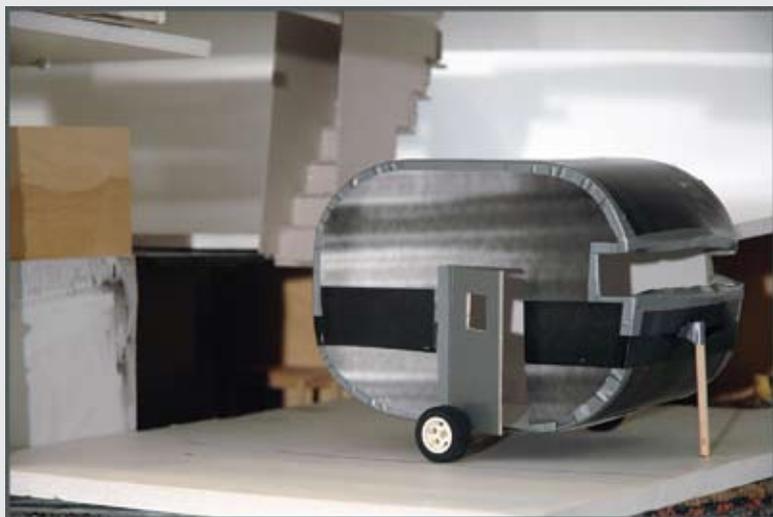


SALVAGED 21, 2008, mixed media

By bringing together the memory of the past and the promise of the future in her model-like structures, Gammon creates a space in which to explore notions of place. Place is not just a setting: it is produced out of lived experience. A sense of place is a process of accumulation. As Lucy Lippard explains, “an intersection of nature, culture, history, and ideology form the ground upon which we stand” (1997:7) and this ground is not fixed. In this way, place is never a given, but is something we continually make and re-make as we live in the world.

Gammon’s constructions offer important departure points for a consideration of how place is not fixed, but rather is constantly in the process of being created and broken down. The activity of making these places is, for Gammon, a way to trigger the memory of a moment of her own creation, the point at which she tripped the shutter of her camera. Now separated from that moment in space and time, she returns to the images; she folds, bends, cuts and glues, and, in her words “documents the attempts and failures to create [a] momentary coherence.” These new coherent spaces where the works coalesce, touch down for the duration of the exhibition. In this way, she brings forth her own personal memory to form a new space.

The fragility of Gammon’s assemblages suggests the imminent possibility of collapse. There is a tension in the scenery elements between scale, dimension, and the mixing of two and three-dimensional space. Like place, the single photographic moment is transformed into a complex, ever-changing terrain—one that is about the process of remembering itself. Suspended on the gallery wall, the work is constructed and displayed in a way that demands the viewer move in close (and closer still) to explore it. By peering, peeking, and moving around the edges, one can glimpse the hidden elements beneath and between the layers of imagery, cardboard, and foamcore. Folds seduce the viewer in further. Enticed by the puzzling process of figuring out this temporary architecture of memory, the pleasant anticipation is, for the viewer, transformed into a radiant tension generated by the work’s refusal to deliver a cohesive sense of place.



SALVAGED 21 (detail)

To accept this process of making a sense of place is to agree with and participate in the demands of the non-fixity of place. Once the exhibition is over, Gammon takes apart the installation and returns the photographs to the archive. They will be called upon the next time she works to remember the places she has photographed. And while her work about photographs, archives, the making of space and place forms a distinctive pattern, it is in the work done between and amongst the constellation, whereby her accomplishment is at its most powerful. In the process of creating her own sensible history, Gammon builds a new shape and possibility for what memory might look like.

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References cited:

Foucault, Michel 1972 (2001). The Archaeology of Knowledge. London: Routledge.

Lippard, Lucy 1997. The Lure of the Local: Senses of Place in a Multicentered Society. New York: The New Press.

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