

By Aileen Burns Stories are told in many ways and for infinitely diverse reasons. They pass history and culture between generations, serve as cautionary tales, inspire innovation and adventure, convey news items, communicate personal experience, or provide a much-needed escape from reality. A number of recent contemporary art exhibitions examine possible reasons for the resurgence of narrative in visual art. Artists are reformulating tales of past events from personal perspectives, in order to reclaim and diversify history. They comment on pertinent global issues like ecology, or create psychedelic, alternate worlds that provide fresh perspectives on, or whimsical escape from, the realities of the contemporary moment. Whatever the goal of a particular story, narratives are constructions that follow familiar patterns, and draw on culturally ingrained expectations.

Artists Geoffrey Farmer, Curtis Grahauer & Kara Uzelman, Liz Knox, Myfanwy MacLeod, and Jon Sasaki, create stories through means specific to visual art. The visual and audio cues of their work call on the viewer to engage in narrative processes. This dynamic form of narration contrasts with more linear, predetermined stories that unfold before a viewer, reader, or listener, while watching a film or reading a book. Through their open and suggestive constructions, these artists' works allow viewers to draw on their own associations, memories, or archive of stories, to develop narrative readings of the work. The viewer becomes the causal agent, narrator, or protagonist, and contributes to the essential temporal component of storytelling. A dynamic engagement with the various elements of each piece is integral to the formation of a story.

Curated by Aileen Burns, the exhibition brings together works from Toronto and Vancouver by artists Geoffrey Farmer, Curtis Grahauer and Kara Uzelman, Liz Knox, Myfanwy MacLeod, and Jon Sasaki.

# Stories,

IN PIECES

10 July 2008 - 24 August 2008

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Image credit: Jon Sasaki, "Theremin Doorknob," 2006