

## Projections exhibition offers a fresh take on cinema in the art World

### Exhibition runs in four galleries across all three campuses

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by Illana Adamo

There will be no ogling of movie stars at this University of Toronto cinematic event. There is, however, the opportunity to appreciate the magnificence of human perception at the tri-campus Projections art exhibition.

The exhibition brings together the history of the projection-based installations movement in Canada from the 1960s to the present using cinematic mediums. Four university galleries are taking part: the Justina M. Barnicke Gallery at Hart House, the U of T Art Centre, Mississauga's Blackwood Gallery and Scarborough's Doris McCarthy Gallery. Barnicke curator Barbara Fischer, curator of the entire exhibit, explained that the pieces displayed in each gallery vary in motif, yet all are related to the theme of cinema.



Kelly Mark's 'Commercial Space,' photo by Pascal Paquette

"The exhibition includes the two winners of this year's Governor General's Awards for Visual Art (Murray Favro and Ian Carr Harris), the winner of the 2007 Images Festival Grand Prize, David Hoffos, and the winner of the first ever Museum of Contemporary Canadian Arts Contemporary Art Award, Michael Snow, in addition to many others who have contributed in major ways to the history of art in Canada," Fischer said.

The focus of the Barnicke exhibit is the motif of space in cinema. The first piece, by Robert Wiens, showcases cinema in the raw -- a blank screen framed by a wooden miniature theatre. In order to see the screen, one must look into the theatre through a window-like opening. The piece inspires one to imagine and anticipate what is forthcoming, much like one would do when awaiting the beginning of a film.

The show continues with a piece entitled *The Muriel Lake Incident* by Janet Cardiff and George Burns. It comes equipped with acoustics to create the experience of watching a movie in a theatre. Viewers are invited to look at the simulated movie screen (a television screen) and listen to the sounds of moviegoers chewing popcorn intermixed with the dialogue of the film. The motivation behind the piece is to create unexpectedness since there awaits a startling surprise at the end of the film, said Fischer. "The pieces shake up what one is used to experiencing when at the movies," she explained.

The focal point of the displays in both the Blackwood and the Doris McCarthy galleries is known as the "cinematic trip." When you watch a film, you are constantly moving in and out of fictional world to the real world. This dialectic aspect of cinema amplifies the sublime nature of the film and the journey it invokes, Fischer noted.

The University of Toronto Art Centre's display highlights the cinematic screen as well as the light-dark component of cinema. Altogether, the exhibition serves to disentangle the illusion of cinema. The viewer is no longer suspended in the illusion once it is disassembled into its individual components. In addition, projection-based installations provide another lens from which to appreciate Canadian art.

Projection-based installations have gained appreciation among academics. As a subject, its history is being studied primarily in cinema studies. "The exhibition is nothing short of a crash course in one of the most significant aspects of the history of contemporary international art -- the exploration and critical engagement with cinematic forms of representation. Including truly pioneering art works, many of which will be counted as national treasures, the exhibition presents the opportunity to see, first-hand, internationally renowned Canadian artists whose work has shaped the development of projection as a critical and conceptual undertaking," Fischer raved.

Projections has received praise across the media landscape, including a favorable review in *The Globe and Mail*. The display offers an alternative world in art appreciation, allowing the viewer unique insight into what controls one's perception.