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Mitch Robertson is a conceptually based artist using photography, sculpture, the internet, installations and drawing to create work that considers the intertwined paths of religion and superstition with globalization and consumerism. Robertson has shown regularly across Canada and internationally in public, artist run and commercial galleries. He is represented by Birch Libralato in Toronto.

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Curator: Collin Zipp
When disaster strikes it can be undeniably hypnotizing. Perhaps this is because it feels like the impossible or unbelievable has happened and that the everyday normal has been completely changed. The comfort in this unthinkable moment is in knowing that “it” probably won’t ever happen. Thus, imagining the notion of disaster allows us to look at ourselves beyond it towards a place of after. All of a sudden... investigates the interstitial space between a disaster and the subsequent place of after. Using disaster as the initial starting point, the work in this exhibition explores possibilities of renewal, waiting, longing, foreshadowing, as well as feelings of confusion and anticipation. These products of disaster necessarily do not all happen at once, however are starting points for navigating the aftermath, a place of rebuilding or one of surrender.

Questions driving this exhibition include: How do the works by these artists interpret the notion of disaster without illustrating the circumstance? What does the aftermath entail? What are the steps leading to an aftermath? In order to help answer these questions, and pose more, work by the following artists will be brought together: Daniel Wong (Lethbridge, AB), Sarah Anne Johnson (Winnipeg, MB), Ian August (Winnipeg, MB), Gordon Lebredt (Winnipeg, MB), Mitch Robertson (Toronto, ON), Jason De Haan (Calgary, AB), Laurie Kang (Toronto, ON) and Jeff Bierk (Toronto, ON). The works by these artists explores possibilities of interpretation and response to the aftermath of disaster.

The Winnipeg winter is well-known. It is a time of despair for most locals, and for the many visitors that travel to the city in those unfortunate months of sub zero temperatures. In Snow Storm, Sarah Anne Johnson photographs a hand sculpted model in the midst of a recreated blistered winter scene; a scene synonymous with a sense of disaster and survival. By photographing this representation of a snow storm instead of an actual one, Johnson inserts a personal memory/experience into the work. This work serves as the anchor point of the exhibition, revealing a literal representaion of disaster and a starting or entry point for the viewer.

With his video work Nessie, Mitch Robertson comments on how a tourist attraction can both help and hinder a town with not much else to offer but its own oddity. As amateur photographers and tourists wait on the shore of Loch Ness hoping to capture proof of a mythical creature, they simultaneously reinforce a false economy and prevent the town from developing future sustainability should this monster suddenly appear. Robertson’s video alludes to this frustration when the group of sightseers, bored with waiting, enter the local souvenir shop ... possibly missing the glimpse they were hopeful for.

Ian August provides a work, Alberta Pure, that looks at the way many have coped with disaster. A solitary broken bottle of vodka rests atop a dirty fridge, as the recognizable Alberta Springs logo reveals its glacier, melting away into nothing. Does the “drink” contain or subdue the residual effects of disaster, or does it only...
only heighten them? As August's paintings originate as photographed still lifes, he uses photography to reinterpret the medium into something unexpected.

Daniel Wong takes the notion of the aftermath one step further in his work, *Hours Pass Like Centuries*. In it Wong has altered an analouge retro flip clock to rearrange time. As one looks at the clock waiting for the next minute to change chronologically, the unexpected happens and time itself as well as the notion of waiting becomes deceptive.

The personal and heartfelt aspects of this interstitial space between disaster and aftermath are studied by Toronto photographic artist Jeff Bierk in his work *Curtain #1*. The sudden deaths of loved ones in a short period of time prompted Bierk to return to the hospital rooms they occupied in sickness. He documents the interiors, specifically the curtains which divided his loved ones from the outside world. In this instance, curtains also highlight the inbetween space separating disaster from survival.

In *untitled (park bench)*, the late conceptual artist Gordon Lebredt explores notions of emptiness and of aftermath. Mounted behind tinted grey acrylic, this serigraph exudes melancholy, depicting a baren park scene, devoid of activity but rich with possibility of what has just happened or what is about to take place if anything at all. Is there optimisim in the struggle to survive? Is this a funerary piece? Can an empty part bench signal Momento Mori?

When disaster strikes we are left with the decision of fight or flight, it is a brief moment of uncertainty. In these miliseconds, blinking, we choose a path or have one thrust upon us. The work *Untitled* by Laurie Kang uses photographic material to recreate this loaded feeling. As light reflects off of this wall of blank glossy sheet film, the viewer's eye is forced to adjust and further re-adjust to acknowledge what is in front of them, to decide if it is a reflection or a representation.

In his work *Lord of the Flies*, Jason de Haan uses the utopic novel to take note of the power of foreshadowing. Placing a green Post-it Note at every seemingly significant part of this paperback book, the artist renders the book's pages so obscured that the foreshadowing is rendered useless. With approximately 7000 tabs, De Haan's *Lord of the Flies* confuses a way out for a way in.

These artists together in *All of a sudden...* offer a varied and cohesive interpretation on the interstitial space between disaster and the notion of the aftermath. Through diverse media and approaches, the works in this exhibition force the viewer to re-examine the moment between disaster (be it literal or metaphorical) and the movement towards a place of after.

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EXHIBITION
13 September - 26 October 2014

OPENING RECEPTION
Friday 13 September | 7 PM

ARTIST TALKS
Saturday 14 September | 3 PM

IMAGE | Ian August, Alberta Pure, oil on canvas, 2010