



ALL OF A SUDDEN...

Ian August
Jeff Bierk
Jason de Haan
Sarah Anne Johnson
Laurie Kang
Gordon Lebrecht
Mitch Robertson
Daniel G. Wong

Curator: Collin Zipp

All of a sudden...

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 Lebrecht (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 blistery 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 analogue 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 Lebrecht explores notions of emptiness and of aftermath. Mounted behind tinted grey acrylic, this serigraph exudes melancholy, depicting a barren 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 optimism in the struggle to survive? Is this a funerary piece? Can an empty park bench signal *Memento Mori*?

When disaster strikes we are left with the decision of fight or flight, it is a brief moment of uncertainty. In these milliseconds, 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.

Collin Zipp

Ian August received his BFA Honours Degree from the University of Manitoba School of Art and his MFA at York University in Toronto. He spent nine months in Berlin and the rest of Germany researching the Bauhaus school and the dissemination of its ideas to North America after being closed down in 1933. This project culminated in a series of paintings and drawings that have recently shown at Golden City Fine Art in Winnipeg. Upcoming exhibitions include a solo show at the University of Winnipeg's 1CO3 in Fall of 2013.

Jeff Bierk's work stems from a combination of fragmentation, disorientation of the self, loss, death and the often haunting nature of the dialogue between past and present. He uses portraiture to explore and communicate aspects within him, and often arrives at unintentional conclusions through the people he photographs. In some way, they become answers to questions he had yet to ask. Jeff was born and raised in Peterborough, Ontario.

Jason de Haan is a multidisciplinary artist living and working in Calgary. His work has been shown in group exhibitions in Canada, the USA, Ireland, Mexico, Sweden and the UK. Past solo projects have been presented at Stride Gallery, Galerie Sans Nom, Lump Gallery/Projects, and at Museo Regional in Queretaro, Mexico. Upcoming solo exhibitions include ODD Gallery and The Khyber ICA. Jason de Haan is a member of the collective UGIV and, with Scott Rogers, is co-director of Pocket Projects, an artist multiple commissioning project.

Sarah Anne Johnson received her BFA from the University of Manitoba in 2002, and MFA at The Yale School of Art in 2004. Her work has been exhibited in numerous national and international exhibitions. She is included in several collections including The Guggenheim Museum in New York, and The National Gallery of Canada.

EXHIBITION

13 September - 26 October 2014

OPENING RECEPTION

Friday 13 September | 7 PM

ARTIST TALKS

Saturday 14 September | 3 PM

Laurie Kang is a Toronto-based artist. Exhibition history includes Jen Bekman Gallery (New York), MOCCA (Toronto), Gallery 44 (Toronto), and inclusion in The Magenta Foundation's Flash Forward Festival in 2011. Recent exhibitions include The Kitchen at Soi Fischer (Toronto), and a solo show at Erin Stump Projects. Forthcoming publications include a collaborative project with Mossless Magazine and a feature in Camera Austria. She is an MFA candidate at Bard College.

Gordon Lebrecht was born in Winnipeg and lived in Toronto until his death in February 2011. Known for its rigorous conceptualism and ambitious materiality, the work of Gordon Lebrecht is among Canada's most challenging and gratifying. Alongside Lebrecht's significant record of exhibitions, publications and interventions is a parallel body of unrealized work—a sprawling hypothetical topology of surfaces, abutments, expanses and disjunctions in which words, objects and images struggle to find and mark their place.

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.

Daniel G Wong is a Canadian artist and a wanderer. He publishes his findings and adventures through various interdisciplinary forms including print editions, websites, and recordings. His publications have been exhibited around North America and internationally in places such as Japan and Iceland.

Collin Zipp is a multidisciplinary artist and programmer/curator who is based in Winnipeg, MB. His visual practice includes video, photo, sculpture, painting and installation and is interested in exploring the ideas of institutional critique and viewer expectation. Zipp currently operates and programs the nomadic artist-run centre ONE NIGHT STAND. He has a BFA from the University of Manitoba and an MFA from the University of Lethbridge.

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

