

DIAZ CONTEMPORARY

MEDIA RELEASE

Tony Romano

New Work

28 June to 28 July 2007

Opening Thursday 28 June 2007

Diaz Contemporary is pleased to present Toronto-based artist **Tony Romano's** second solo exhibition with the gallery, featuring new films, sculpture, installation and photography.

Romano's exhibition, *New Work*, reflects his ongoing interests in narrative, popular culture and philosophy and his practice involves reinventing the formal strategies of cinema in works that explore concepts of love, city and identity. *New Work* adapts these strategies and ideas focusing on the writing of Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard, the scientific experiments of Dorothy Retallack as well as ideas from the mid-19th century American Transcendental movement.

In *Good night my Love*, a 35mm film transferred to DVD, the footage is shown unedited, presenting it's subject matter, Toronto, in its most raw and romantic terms. The soundtrack, detached from the film and pressed on a seven inch vinyl, reproduces Alexander Muir's "The Maple Leaf Forever," originally written as the first national anthem of Canada and played by Will Kidman. The poster sign, designed by an Honest Ed's employee, emphasizes the work's made-in Toronto local feel.

Johnny Young / William Judge, a seven inch vinyl album cover accompanied by sound and lyrics by Romano, is a work based on Soren Kierkegaard's book *Either/Or* (1843). In this work, Romano presents his pseudonymous authorship as a lyrical dichotomy between existential stages of life. Romano's opposing characters, Johnny Young and William Judge, are presented on either side of the album cover; one character sings a song dedicated to the aesthetic and the other a song dedicated to the ethical. No conclusions are drawn from the personified phases of being, however much like the physical form of the record itself, the viewer is forced to choose a side.

Judas vs. Judas is a work based on the plant and music experiments of Dorothy Retallack and the heavy metal band Judas Priest's alleged subliminal suicide record *Stained Class*. For this work, Romano will construct two cabinets in the gallery with built-in sound systems to document the growth of two plants. One will grow to the sound of the *Stained Class* album, and the other to the sound of the album in reverse. The work will experiment with the notion of nature being the final judge in taste.

The Inward Morning is a sculpture inspired by the artist's interest in the American Transcendentalist movement and a poem with the same name by Henry David Thoreau. The sculpture, using the poem as a script for its construction, projects an infinite forest of mirrored boxes metaphorically recalling the Transcendentalist belief that the essence of spirituality lies in the human character through the practice of life.

Tony Romano received his B.F.A. from the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design. His last solo show at Diaz Contemporary, *Three Tales*, was in the winter of 2006. Romano has also shown at Mercer Union and internationally at Kulturhust in Stockholm, Sweden. Select group shows include *Weathervane* at Oakville Galleries (2005), *Republic of Love* (2004), curated by Xandra Eden, *Dedicated to You, But You Weren't Listening* (2005) by Reid Shier at Toronto's Power Plant, and the Charles C. Scott Gallery in Vancouver (2006).