

DIAZ CONTEMPORARY

PRESS RELEASE

Elizabeth McIntosh

Elsbeth Pratt

17 October to 15 November 2008

Opening Friday 17 October from 6 to 9

Diaz Contemporary is pleased to present the works of Elizabeth McIntosh and Elsbeth Pratt. This is McIntosh's second solo-show at the gallery, and Pratt's first. Both McIntosh and Pratt utilize the language of abstraction to question the inherent nature of their media, painting and sculpture respectively.

Modernism, and specifically geometric abstraction, has always given McIntosh something to respond to. She attempts to resist the reverent nature of pure abstraction, through the constant tweaking of very subtle details. In 2004, the introduction of the triangle as a dominant form in her work resulted in a new architectonic reference. Since then, McIntosh has explored how the triangle, while two-dimensional on its own, becomes three-dimensional when multiplied and juxtaposed with similar shapes of various colours and tones.

Though much of McIntosh's previous work has employed a number of different formal disruptions to create a more complex and diverse space, her recent body of work has no devices. For this group of paintings, she came up with a prescribed palette of bright colours that are repeated with minor variations in each piece. The paintings themselves offer little evidence of previous underpainting or decision-making. The only demonstration of process in the work is visible brush marks. These bold paintings continue to provide the optical experience of her previous work but achieve this with more economical means. The optimism of these new works seems very timely.

Elizabeth McIntosh, who lives in Vancouver, has had several solo shows in Canada and the United States. These include exhibitions at Blanket Contemporary Gallery in Vancouver and Parisian Laundry in Montreal. Group exhibitions include *PAINT* at the Vancouver Art Gallery, and *Spell: A Travelling Exhibition of Contemporary Abstraction* at the Mendel Art Gallery in Saskatoon. McIntosh is the recipient of a number of grants and awards. She is currently an Assistant Professor of Painting and Visual Arts at Emily Carr University.

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Elsbeth Pratt's sculptures demonstrate her interest in architecture and social spaces. She uses a variety of prosaic materials, from plywood to beverage containers, to comment on how architecture structures our lives. Throughout her career, she has shown an interest in public spaces such as shopping malls, gardens and train stations, as well as "pseudo-escapist" spaces such as spas, casinos and resorts. She has also explored airports and is interested in how they control our actions as we navigate them.

Her most recent sculptures, made of common building and impoverished materials, are precariously perched, sometimes leaning on a wall for support. These collage-like constructions include the space that surrounds them. Through a physical and involved working process, Pratt balances materials, ideas and space to formulate her work through a constant flow and accumulation of ideas. In addition, her use of common and readily available materials is contrasted with the permanence that is traditionally associated with sculpture. In this way, Pratt challenges assumptions about the inherent nature of her medium.

Vancouver-based Elsbeth Pratt has exhibited nationally and internationally. She has had numerous solo-shows including *Nonetheless* at Charles H Scott Gallery in Vancouver, *Bluff* at the Contemporary Art Gallery in Vancouver, and shows at the Southern Alberta Art Gallery in Lethbridge, as well as YYZ in Toronto. Selected group exhibitions include *Not Sheep: New Urban Enclosures and Commons* at Artspeak in Vancouver; the travelling exhibition *archetypes* in Vancouver, Tokyo, and Sydney; and *Weak Thought* at the Vancouver Art Gallery. Pratt currently teaches at Simon Fraser University.