

# DIAZ CONTEMPORARY

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Paulette Phillips**

*"History appears twice, the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce."*

29 March to 26 April 2008

Diaz Contemporary is pleased to announce artist **Paulette Phillips'** second solo-show with the gallery. Phillips has established an international reputation for her tense, humorous and uncanny explorations of the phenomena of conflicting energies. This highly anticipated installation, features new work in sculpture, photography and video that documents residual emotion and presence. The work continues Phillips' interest in the contradictions that play out in our construction of stability.

*"History appears twice, the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce."* is inspired by the poetically tragic aura that surrounds E 1027, a villa on the Cote d'Azur built by architect and designer Eileen Gray for her lover Jean Badovici in 1929. Having built the house as a romantic getaway, Gray eventually walked away from her labor of love. For a period of time it then became known as Le Corbusier's house, while Gray languished in obscurity.

*Shell*, a thirty-two minute video shot on location by Phillips and Robert Lee, contains traces of Gray's original vision. In tracing the evidence of abuse the house has endured since its sensuous beginning, the video captures an emotional topography that lies beneath the villa's structure to renegotiate the enduring legacy of Gray's modernist gem. This extensive footage captures the house before it underwent the contested renovation that restored Le Corbusier's controversial murals.

*The Egoist/Lover*, is an elegant reworking of Gray's original Satellite mirror that she designed for Badovici's bedroom. Phillips' motorized mirror shies away from the viewer's gaze. *Touché* traps two magnetized books, Le Corbusier's *The Poetics of Metaphor* with Gray's monograph *Eileen Gray* within a cage. One book hovers over the other repelled by its negative energy field. *Knock Knock* is a series of three gyclee prints produced from collaged photographs that document the complexity of presence still evident in the villa. *The Rubber House* is a tactile and mutable model of the villa that sits on two dissonant colour fields.

The exhibition draws from the personalities, emotions and histories that surround both architects by heightening the covert and inherent tensions that defined their practices and mark this house as a haunted site. The works in the installation align to narrate the faded tenets that fueled this vision of modernism, capturing on video and through objects, the idea of the house as a ruin wrought by conflicting energies.

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**Paulette Phillips'** work has been featured in solo exhibitions at Danielle Arnaud contemporary art; The Oakville Galleries; Cambridge Galleries and The Ottawa Art Gallery. Recent group exhibitions include: Gallerie Chomette, Paris; The Canadian Cultural Centre, Paris; The Power Plant, Toronto; ZKM, Germany; Kunsthaus Graz, Austria; Heidelberger Kunstverein, Germany, Ludwig Museum, Hungary and the Palazzo della Papesse, Italy. Phillips teaches film and installation at The Ontario College of Art and Design. Upcoming commissions include: *The Walking Fern*, solar powered robotic ferns to be installed at the Tatton Park Biennale, Britain, May – September 2008; and Fashion and Crime that will premiere at a screening at The Tate Modern on May 10<sup>th</sup> 2008.

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