

PATRICK MIKHAIL GALLERY

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IN MOURNING OF CINDY STELMACKOWICH

NOVEMBER 10 TO DECEMBER 13, 2010

ARTIST RECEPTION:

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2010

5:30 P.M. TO 9 P.M.

PATRICK MIKHAIL GALLERY is pleased to present ***IN MOURNING OF*** by Ottawa-based artist **CINDY STELMACKOWICH**. First previewed at Art Toronto 2010 from October 28 to November 1, this solo exhibition of powerful and poignant new works continues the artist's exploration of the cultural attitudes that surrounded death, the body, and disease during the Victorian age.

The exhibition of new works is unveiled in several layers—in a series of prints, objects, and sculptures. In *Mourning I and Mourning II*, large-format digital prints of dissected bodies from old Victorian anatomical atlases appear doubled, as if embodying ghosts. Surrounded by hand-pleated, black silk fabric and ornately carved wooden frames, these natural stains haunt the illustration and function as melancholic transfers. Stelmackowich continues to probe this paradox of death and discovery in a series of 19th Century microscopic drawings of disease that have been digitally layered with scans of black mourning lace. In her series entitled *Cholera Shapes and Spaces*, patterned black lace appears as if to veil, cloak, and

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adorn a series of historical hand-drawn images produced in the effort to find a cure for epidemic disease. The artist's incorporation of decorative mourning lace onto Victorian scientific "evidence," continues her exploration of the visual obsessions of science and its strong attachments to decoration and aesthetics.

In further reference to the rituals of etiquette that surrounded death, the exhibition includes a series of powerful works Stelmackowich refers to as *Requiems*. In each of these sculptures, numerous butterfly wings are collaged onto the flat surfaces of marble obelisks and pyramids. In selecting to use delicate natural materials that allude to the tragically short lives of butterflies and the fragility of human existence, she refers to both the human fascination with nature, and the spectacles of both death and artistic creation. The small *Requiems* are enshrined in glass Victorian bell jars, whereas the larger 6-foot obelisk that is composed of hundreds of iridescent butterfly wings entitled *In Paradisum*, functions as its own memorial to beauty and the dead.

Cindy Stelmackowich is an Ottawa-based artist, curator, and teacher. Born in Saskatchewan, she moved to Ottawa to pursue an M.A. after completing a B.A. and B.F.A. at the University of Saskatchewan. While completing a Ph.D. and teaching at Carleton University, her artwork and academic research has focused on themes related to medical science. In her work, she has questioned the methods and meanings of science; how science is performed on the body; and how the languages of medical science operate. Stelmackowich's work often brings together diverse medical-related materials and found objects, most recently through digitally combining photographic images. She has exhibited across Canada and the United States in solo and group exhibitions, has received numerous grants from the Canada Council for the Arts, the Ontario Arts Council, and the City of Ottawa, and was the recipient of the Ottawa Council for the Arts' 2009 Mid-Career Artist's Award. In September 2008 Stelmackowich launched a new solo exhibition entitled "Embalmination" at the

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Kristi Engle Gallery in Los Angeles. She also appears in the group exhibition **OBSOLETE CONCEPTS** currently on view at The Robert McLaughlin Gallery in Oshawa, Ontario, from November 6, 2010, to January 2, 2011. She will be featured in an upcoming issue of *Academic Medicine*, the prestigious journal of the Association of American Medical Colleges produced in Washington, D.C. Her work can be found in the collections of the Canada Council Art Bank, the City of Ottawa, the Ottawa Art Gallery, as well as numerous corporate and private collections.

Cindy Stelmackowich gratefully acknowledges the support of the Ontario Arts Council and the City of Ottawa.

For more information:

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