

PATRICK MIKHAIL GALLERY

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**PATRICK MIKHAIL GALLERY presents MAGNIFICENT
CORPSES, a new installation by artist VERA
GREENWOOD.**

Exhibition: MAGNIFICENT CORPSES

Dates: NOVEMBER 24 TO DECEMBER 20, 2006

Opening Reception: FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2006
5:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Artist Talk: SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2006
3 P.M.

OTTAWA, November 24, 2006...PATRICK MIKHAIL GALLERY is pleased to present MAGNIFICENT CORPSES, a new photo-based installation by multi-media artist VERA GREENWOOD.

For this pre-holiday presentation, there will be a special "Magnificent Price" of \$100 on all signed and numbered Dead Bird prints. After the close of the exhibition, the prints will be offered at their original price of \$475. All prints will be available for pick-up or delivery in time for holiday gift giving.

The exhibition takes place in two parts, and was inspired by two separate incidents. While reading Sarah Vowel's *Assassination Vacation*, Greenwood came across an interesting quote by Anneli Rufus, from her 1999 book

Magnificent Corpses: Searching Through Europe for St. Peter's Head, St. Chiara's Heart, St. Stephen's Hand, and Other Saints' Relics. Upon borrowing this book from the Ottawa Public Library, she observed, with much chagrin, that a previous reader had written copious notes in the margins throughout. At first she tried to ignore this parallel narrative, but ultimately the marginalia was too abundant and proved to be quite compelling in and of itself. The pencilled-in running commentary generates a portrait of a woman who, while demonstrating an intense religious devotion simultaneously, reveals rather an ironic abhorrence for the author.

A year previously, in June 2004, a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher accidentally flew into Greenwood's living room window, effectively killing itself. The artist documented the corpse immediately after the crash. *Dead Bird* is a selection of 49 of those images, beautifully printed and presented.

Vera Greenwood's art practice is subjectively personal, placing emphasis on storytelling, social studies, and a conceptual approach to representing the everyday. It is a way of working based on observation of the world. Utilizing the museological display technique of juxtaposing image/object and text, her recent installations weave a narrative around the physical evidence displayed. The work reveals her interest in record-keeping and investigative research, as well as the ethics involved in the act of looking.

Greenwood has a Master of Fine Arts from Montreal's Concordia University and a Diploma of Visual Arts from the Alberta College of Art and Design in Calgary. She has had solo exhibitions at the Ottawa Art Gallery, Southern Alberta Art Gallery, AxeNeo7, Carleton University Art Gallery, Dunlop Art Gallery, L'Espace VOX, Truck Gallery, Stride Gallery, and Art Gallery of Sudbury. Her work is in the collections of the Canada Council Art Bank, the City of Ottawa, Carleton University Art Gallery, and the Alberta Foundation for the Arts.

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For more information, please contact:

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GALLERY HOURS: MONDAY TO SATURDAY

12 TO 6 P.M.

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VERA GREENWOOD EXHIBITION STATEMENT

■ MAGNIFICENT CORPSES

My early work focused on visual politics, especially the concept of the gaze and the voyeuristic position, a thread of which still runs through my projects. In recent years my printmaking/installation practice has developed into a creative exploration and documentation of events excerpted from everyday life. It foregrounds storytelling, social studies and a way of working based on observation of the world. Through various projects involving private and public spaces I have employed social probes to investigate the complexities of human interaction.

My art practice also places emphasis on the exploration of various narrative structures (autobiographical, historical, literary) as well as their conventions (museology, popular fiction). The *Magnificent Corpses* print-set is a continuation of my ongoing interest in the conventions used in the transmission of sanctioned information (the dominant narrative) and the possibility for subversion (the counter narrative) within those conventions.

While reading Sarah Vowel's *Assassination Vacation*, I came across an interesting quote by Anneli Rufus, from her 1999 book **Magnificent Corpses: Searching Through Europe for St. Peter's Head, St. Chiara's Heart, St. Stephen's Hand, and Other Saints' Relics**. Upon borrowing this book from the Ottawa Public Library, I observed, with much chagrin, that a previous reader had written copious notes in the margins throughout. At first I tried to ignore this parallel narrative, but ultimately the marginalia was too abundant and proved to be quite compelling in and of itself. The pencilled-in running commentary generates a portrait of a woman, who while demonstrating an intense religious devotion simultaneously reveals rather an ironic abhorrence for the author.

I photographed all the page-sets, including the cover, which had been marked, even minimally, in pencil. I developed the format for the prints: three panels of 12 images, but this too, in keeping with previous work, has blossomed into a process piece. It was my original intent to photograph 36 page-sets, but while engaged in the Photoshop segment of the project I discovered that somehow, in

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the repetitive process of copy stand photography, I had neglected to document pages 146-147. The book had already been returned to the library by this point and quite possibly altered - I'll never know, because that phase of project development was over and, in my mind, done with. The remaining 35 images, all actual size, have been arranged in a loose grid fashion on the three panels.

A year previously, in June 2004, a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher accidentally flew into my living room window, effectively killing herself. I documented the corpse immediately after the crash, filling my digital camera memory card - a total of 114 photographs. I then stored the series in my archives for possible later use. *Dead Bird* is a selection of 49 of those images and is being paired, under the same title (for obvious reasons), with the Magnificent Corpses prints for this exhibition only.