

Press Release
February 21, 2005

Picturing the Downtown Eastside

Curated by Charo Neville

30 April – 29 May 2005

Opening Reception: Friday, 29 April, 8 – 10 pm

Public Forum: Saturday, 7 May, 12 – 3 pm
desmedia Tapings: Sundays, 1, 8, 15, 22 & 29 May, 2 – 5 pm

Six years after the Or Gallery presented its last exhibition in its Downtown Eastside location, 112 West Hastings will be re-opening its doors. During the month of May, the exhibition *Picturing the Downtown Eastside* will re-activate this historical building, once a nexus for Vancouver's art scene, that included the Perel Gallery, Artspeak, the Kootenay School of Writing, the Or Gallery and artist studios.

Picturing the Downtown Eastside looks at this neighbourhood as subject, presenting various photographic and video works and alternative community-based projects that address the area's architecture and social landscape. The exhibition situates itself within a discourse about definitions of community and the complexities of representation within Vancouver's most socially and economically challenged, yet at the same time vibrant, neighbourhood. The juxtaposition of works and artistic strategies evoke questions about how artists and the general public negotiate and identify the space of the Downtown Eastside and how we formulate cognitive and visual maps of this area. A public forum held during the exhibition will extend this debate and dialogue to a larger participating public in Vancouver.

This exhibition presents work by Rebecca Belmore, Rita Beiks, Clint Burnham, Stan Douglas, Arni Haraldsson, Sharon Kravitz, and Susan Stewart, all of whom have represented the Downtown Eastside in their past work and community projects. The show also features work by resident Downtown Eastside painter, Paul St. Germain and graffiti artist Hermes, as well as site-specific work by Margot Leigh Butler. In addition, the desmedia collective will re-initiate their Downtown Eastside video archive project with a camera set up once a week in the gallery for people in the community to tell their stories, and share their poems and songs.

This is the first in a series of exhibitions curated by Master of Arts candidates in the Critical Curatorial Studies Program at the University of British Columbia, with support from the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery and the Alvin Balkind Fund for Student Curatorial Initiatives.

For more information contact Charo Neville at 778.881.2427 cneville@interchange.ubc.ca
Hours: Wednesday – Sunday 12-5pm, 112 West Hastings Street (between Abbott and Cambie)
www.belkin-gallery.ubc.ca 604.822.2759