

Derek Brunen

Plot

January 25 - March 3, 2007

This exhibition is product of an endurance performance in which the artist digs his own grave, documenting the act in video and production stills. The resulting works, a real time high definition video that is six hours in duration as well as a large format print are meant to epically depict an action that is simultaneously and excruciatingly: loaded, cliché, banal, masochistic, silly, pompous, humorous, sincere, and physically laborious. The technological and financial challenges of working in HD video provide another test of endurance, both for the artist and his crew of production volunteers as well as the exhibiting institution whose modest resources seem to demand less ambitious proposals.

Adorno wrote that "museum and mausoleum are connected by more than phonetic association. Museums are the family sepulchers of works of art." Brunen's technological experience comes from years of working as an AV technician in the basement of the Vancouver Art Gallery, an activity that has undoubtedly influenced his artistic practice but more importantly, has supported it. The plot site is set against a perfectly constructed Vancouver tableau from which an ever-deepening black hole offers a vertiginous, if not slow, retreat. This is a work that contains varied art historical references that make up the baggage that both burdens and informs the contemporary artist's desire for novel ideas, social relevance, and economic sustainability. The odds of success seem to be dismal enough to suggest that choosing a career in art is already digging one's own grave. Which also suggests the futility of an art practice removed from generalized patterns of social consumption as commercial success is the most effective route to widespread visibility beyond the limited sphere of a specific scene.

Like many artists before him, Brunen utilizes an act of extreme physicality to articulate the heroic and pathetic struggles of art making. But left unedited, the drama of the act becomes measured by its parodic nature as well as the tenacity of the viewer, the latter subjected to redundancy and repetition as the plot unfolds.

Derek Brunen graduated from Emily Carr in 2001. He is a former member of Intermission Artists Society and has participated in exhibitions and festivals at CSA Space, Western Front, Video In, 69 Pender and the Prince Takamado Gallery in Tokyo.

- Michele Faguet

Or Gallery

103.480 Smithe St. Vancouver, BC Canada V6B 5E4

T. +1 604.683.7395 E. or @ orgallery.org

Gallery hours 12 - 5PM Tuesday - Saturday

Admission Free