

**LIGHTNESS.
I HAVE FELT LOVE.
I HAVE KNOWN
PEACE.
AND I HAVE
STANDARDS.
>CONFESSIONS
OF A CANADIAN
TERRORIST>
S K E E N A
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that the treaty process is a detriment way of life. What is your way of life?

of life that I am fighting for that I wish I live is a way of life that has been crafted thousands of years by my ancestors. It is to see the many negative aspects to the way we live in, but the reality is that there is a very little or no positive aspects to the way of life. Therefore, the way of life that I want to attain is one that is expedient to our needs, a way of life that provides us with healing rather than problems.

do you think that it will be difficult to attain a way of life after the treaties have been

broken, it is very difficult as it is where statements towards those of us that are trying to reclaim a strong and healthy life for our people. Implementation of the treaties will only worsen the conditions of the land. As a result, more authority and control will be granted to the Canadian government.

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Living in Vancouver I have been offered many things while walking through the city. Things like tickets, transfers, watches, ugly jackets, pot, smack, crack, speed and a plethora of other things. The other night I was offered cheese.

This made me stop cold in my tracks. And after I stopped laughing, and said no thanks, I began to think about how totally unexpected cheese was. Being offered cheese was so out of wack with the norm that I found myself questioning it. Was it a trick, or a joke? My expectations had been toyed with and it made me closely examine an almost everyday occurrence. My habit of ignoring people who are trying to sell me things in the street was momentarily broken. I had the same sensation walking through the Concourse Gallery during the SQUATTERS show. This show was not like other shows, I thought. There weren't any art objects in the gallery. Instead, covering the walls were descriptions of artworks, performances, and installations that were going on throughout the city.

The SQUATTERS show was a forum for an art form that establishes its context in the periphery of what is defined as art, and in spaces not yet considered within the grasp of the art world. This type of art works off of the expectations that our routines will be constant. The artists hide this work in amongst our habits and routine behaviors. Whether this art form is called Squatting, post-conceptualism, or neo-conceptualism, or public art, is not important. What is of importance is the

dialogue created around the art practice for its conceptual merits, and use of public context. The artists in the SQUATTERS show are following in the footsteps of artists like: Germaine Koh, Stan Douglas, David Shrigley, and On Kawara, who in some form or fashion have ventured into this type of contextual playground, and have received acclaim.

The artists chosen for the show do not prescribe to accepted gallery criteria or politics. That they do not need the arena of the gallery for their work to function puts them in a unique situation. The artists are always showing, because they do not have to wait for a show to come along. The work turns up here, there, everywhere and nowhere all at the same time.

This raises an interesting question - how does one propose and curate a show about work that operates outside of a gallery?

Curator Laura Madera made an attempt to create a dialogue around this type of art practice, and to bring it into academia. "The absence of the object in this space allowed for the representation of the ideas and the myths around the work. I focused on creating an environment in which the viewer would think about the work, and also recognize the fact that the objects would lose something if I brought them in here." Said Madera.

For example, Sarah White chose to confess her greatest fears amongst complete strangers. Most would turn away believing her to be crazy, others

passing by without caring. If she had done this in a gallery the viewers would have hung on every word, considering each sentence. Sarah would have probably been more conscious of what she was saying because of the attentive audience. Anthony Schrag left fake wall sockets with exposed wires dangling, in various places in the city, creating issues of safety and responsibility to question. Christopher Kowal's cryptic diagram left much to the imagination, and kept him out of trouble, leaving me to believe that it had something to do with video. Diana Savage inserted clothing into Bureau's Angola, with tags that had little stories of the previous owner. This tackled a previously unconsidered area, at least by myself. I had never before thought that maybe a serial killer, or rollerblader owned the clothing that I bought second hand.

This show was interesting because it challenged my own conceptions about showing and venue. Somehow, the discovery by accident, of this work makes it that much more important and precious. This accidental viewing and consequential hijacking of our expectations is what binds these works together. The artists claim everyone as their viewer, with the foreknowledge that most people, even if they happen upon the work, will not know what to make of it. And it is this questioning which validates their existence in the art world. □

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