



NATALIE PURSCHWITZ:
RITUALS

ART GALLERY AT EVERGREEN | June 13 - July 15, 2013

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Art Gallery at Evergreen

Interdisciplinary artist Natalie Purschwitz juxtaposes art and design with performance and daily life. Her interests include anthropology, language, mythology, the notion of survival, and clothing as a type of cultural production. Purschwitz produces a small clothing line called *Hunt & Gather* and has designed costumes for numerous theatrical and dance productions. She works nationally and internationally and has exhibited in galleries such as the McMichael Canadian Art Collection and the Vancouver Art Gallery. In 2012 she was an artist in residence at *La Cité Internationale des Arts* in Paris, France as a recipient of the Canada Council for the Arts International Residency award. Many of her works currently on display are inspired by this experience. She studied at

the University of Calgary (BA, Archaeology), the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Art and Science and Emily Carr University of Art and Design (BFA, Media Arts).

Rituals has transformed the Art Gallery at Evergreen into an otherworldly space that engages the viewer on multiple levels. Purschwitz is displaying five major projects for this show, working in a variety of media including sculpture, installation, performance and photography to create overlapping themes of ritual, artifice and the limits of fashion. The exhibition is an examination of the rituals of our everyday lives, such as dressing, and how they, and our understanding of them, may be affected by outside influences ranging from history, need and desire.



Rituals, Installation Shot

With *Makeshift*, Purschwitz made a 365-day commitment to wear only self-made clothing in order to discover how this would affect the way she lived her life. In this project, all of the clothing, shoes, accessories, undergarments, bathing suits etc. that she wore during that year are on display, emphasizing the range of garments needed to fulfill this task. During this project Purschwitz documented her findings through a self-reflective blog that examined how ideology can be influenced by our clothing choices.



Fakeshift, Installation Shot

Within the exhibition viewers will notice relationships between all of Purschwitz's pieces. *Trace*, which was first showcased in Kizuna at the Japanese Canadian National Museum in September 2010, was a pathway of covered stones that led people on a colorful path through personal history. Each rock was individually wrapped in fabric cut from clothing collected over time, while the stones had been collected from places of significance to the artist. This first stage of *Trace* acted as a kind of record of the relationships Purschwitz holds with the world.

In the Art Gallery at Evergreen, *Trace* has evolved to become a sculptural component of *Makeshift*. By connecting to *Makeshift* both physically and metaphorically, *Trace* now functions as a path which starts at a specific moment and leads us into an unreal world. The wrapped stones transition into stones covered in layers of gold, (gold fabric, pure gold leaf, faux gold leaf, gold paint) segueing into the next piece, *Fakeshift*. Purschwitz leads the viewer through different levels of artifice as a way to consider such notions as value, imitation and opulence.

Clothing is a consistently recurring theme throughout Purschwitz's work. In her *Paris Series* she pushes the boundaries of fashion by moving into the fantastical. Purschwitz creates scenes which show an overlap of classical architecture, collected materials and aspects of current trends in Paris. Though the images are staged to suggest a fashion shoot, Purschwitz challenges the conventions of the fashion world by drawing from unseemly sources, as exemplified by the accessories made from scavenged materials that ornament the figures in her photographs.

Just as Purschwitz challenges the notion of fashion, she continues this integration of the unreal in her *Xilitla Series*. The two images presented in this exhibition, taken in a surrealist sculpture garden complete

with overgrown Escher-like staircases, evoke an imagined space. Purschwitz uses collage and uncanny accessories to further emphasize this dreamlike environment.

As an investigation into a set of progressive ideas spanning a wide radius, *Natalie Purschwitz: Rituals* walks the viewer through a specific past and into the unknown.

Natalie Purschwitz and Evergreen Cultural Centre would like to thank the Hamber Foundation and the Vancouver Foundation for making this exhibition possible.

By Natalie Purschwitz and
Cassandra Flint, Curatorial Assistant



LIST OF WORKS

Featured at the Art Gallery at Evergreen

Makeshift, 2010

Completed in 2010, the artist made a commitment to wear only things she had made herself for an entire year. This included bathing suits, undergarments, footwear and accessories.

Trace, 2010

Stones from places of significance in the artist's past were wrapped in pieces of clothing and fabric of a similar nature. Originally Trace created a path through which individuals could walk, contributing to the collective history of the piece. In this new version of the installation, the piece has evolved to become a segue between *Makeshift* and *Fakeshift*.

Fakeshift, 2013

A set-like installation displaying "fake" clothes that push fashion to the point of impossibility. After the stark reality of having to produce all of her clothes for a year and the limitations this imposed on the artist, *Fakeshift* becomes a kind of fantasy space where the practical aspects of clothing are no longer a hindrance.

Paris Series, 2012-2013

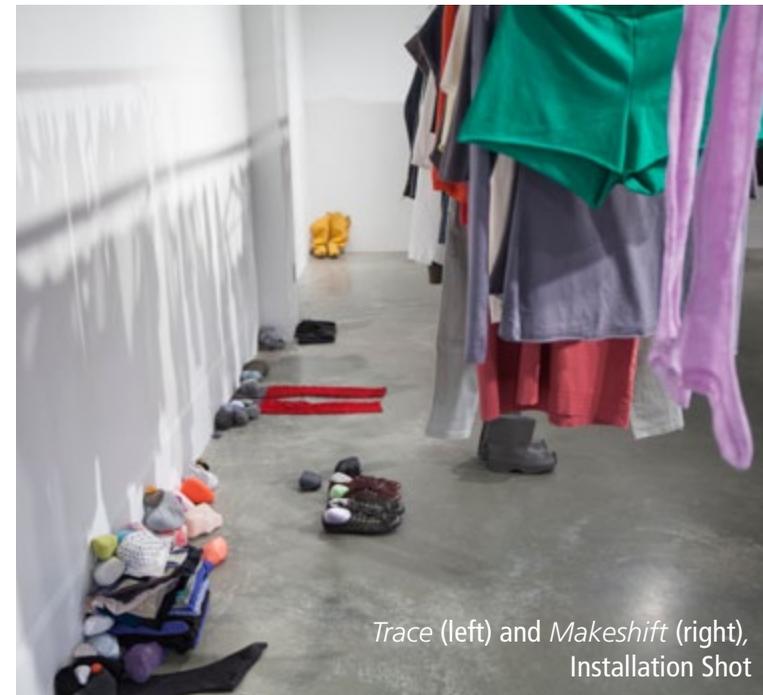
Taken during her time in residency at *La Cité Internationale des Arts*, this work examines fashion as a form of display, ritual and as a tribe-forming mechanism in an attempt to exaggerate and emphasize the abstract nature of fashion.

Xilitla Series, 2012-2013

These two photographs represent a part of a series of images taken in a surrealist garden in Xilitla, Mexico. Collage and photo-manipulation are used to further emphasize the otherworldly nature of the setting.

Midden, 2013

With links to *Trace*, *Makeshift* and *Fakeshift*, *Midden* functions as a kind of aestheticized trash heap of past and present clothing, fabric and scraps. Rising up like a mountain, this large hairy form has an anthropomorphic presence, again suggesting a kind of impossible garment.



Trace (left) and *Makeshift* (right),
Installation Shot



Midden, Installation Shot



Paris Series, Installation Shot

ART GALLERY AT EVERGREEN

1205 Pinetree Way, Coquitlam, BC V3B 7Y3

Curator

Astrid Heyerdahl, M.A., M.Ed.

Gallery Hours

12-5pm, Monday-Saturday

Free Tours: Saturdays, 2pm

Website

evergreenculturalcentre.ca

THANK YOU

Hamber Foundation

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Kyla Bailey

ALL IMAGES BY KYLA BAILEY

Cover Image: *Makeshift*, Installation Shot

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