

media release

media contact:
Jocelyn Calderhead
Marketing Manager
604.927.6566

For immediate release: Nov 25, 2008

The Art Gallery at Evergreen presents What Use Art History?

COQUITLAM - After four months of showcasing historical paintings in the Art Gallery at the Evergreen Cultural Centre, a contemporary twist on the notion of history, or in particular, art history, comes full circle with the opening of a very original exhibition called **What Use Art History?**

The touring exhibit runs **December 5, 2008 to January 11, 2009** and features work by seven upcoming and established artists, Ursula Medley, Justin Ogilvie, William Pitcher, Elizabeth Russell, Ruth Scheuing, Ed Varney and Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas, gathered together from five different locations in BC.

Curator Ann Rosenberg selected these participants: "because they created art inspired by models and ideas taken overtly from the past and yet transcended the sources by making unusual, often relevant contributions to today's visual history."

The over 40 artworks on display, range from paintings, photography and sculpture to mixed media installations, jacquard weaving and artists stamps. They are accompanied by illustrated wall panels that provide direct and oblique references to the sources of inspiration for the style and content of many of the pieces.

Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas' Haida Manga approach to graphic narrative is a hybrid form of expression that combines Northwest Coast Indigenous figurative style with the design mode of Japanese anime comics. He has built a tongue-in-cheek version of a traditional Haida shield out of car hoods and embellished it with narratives in this bold style. He currently lives on Bowen Island.

Vancouver artist **Justin Ogilvie** paints angst-ridden, ethereal figures in scenarios he directs and records in the privacy of his studio. These demonstrate his great skill in rendering anatomical imagery of the kind that Michelangelo practiced in his preparatory sketches in the 16th century.

William Pitcher, a photographer from Golden B.C., imitates and contemporizes specially chosen Greek mythological figures which he frequently discovers in the art of William Bougereau and The PreRaphaelites. In the final ink-jet on canvas murals Pitcher's photo-constructions of local models, amalgamations of many different backdrops and artifacts bring together as many as 15 different computer files together to create, visually seamless, wise and humorous critiques of Contemporary Canadian life.

Ursula Medley's landscapes, figures studies and still lifes reflect what she sees around her and in her house in the outskirts of Powell River. Her skilled handling of traditional oil painting techniques, rich palette and skillful brushwork results from a deep study of Baroque, Impressionist and Post-Impressionist art. Her "Lenora Series"

features her neighbour as model for a group of canvases that reflect a more eccentric, fantasy aspect of wilderness existence.

Elizabeth Russell juxtaposes a 1953 work by E.J. Hughes of the Comox Valley area to an installation in which a 2006 painting which shows how suburban homes and access roads have supplanted the farms and orchards is the focal point. "Transition" with its generic big-box store and parking lot is a canvas that documents the disappearance of wilderness in rural areas.

Internationally known Vancouver artist **Ruth Scheuing** transforms Duchamp's "Nude Descending a Staircase" painting into a hand woven Jacquard loom and computer-assisted design called "Cyborg Descending Staircase". The real theme of this weaving and her other artworks in **What Use...?** is not her borrowing of visual imagery from the past, but rather her perception of the importance of the history of technological advances to art manufacture in the present.

Ed Varney, well know for his International Correspondence Art Network (or mail art), contributes the most obviously appropriate work in this exhibit. His fill-in-the-blank "M.O.N.A." images will play an audience participation role in **What Use...?** And pieces selected from his current "Collaboration with Dead Artists Series" pay fairly direct homage to Mondrian, Van Gogh and 20th Century Dadaist, Kurt Schwitters. The artistamp sheets, however, are very personal expressions relating to Varney's long-standing role in an international correspondence network which began in the early 70s and which can be conducted from any part of the world including Courtenay where Varney currently resides.

What Use Art History? is sure to entertain, educate and challenge the viewer. There will be several opportunities to meet curator Ann Rosenberg and the exhibiting artists both at the opening reception, Sunday, December 7 and at the closing "Connoisseur's Night" on Sunday, January 11. Check the web for details
www.evergreenculturalcentre.ca

Ann Rosenberg will be conducting a Portfolio Review Session (\$10 + GST) on Wednesday December 10 from 6 to 8pm. Call 604-927-6552 to register.

-30-