yvonne lammerich
nicholas wade
jean van wijk

Southern Alberta Art Gallery
June 26, 2008 – September 7, 2008

COMMON GROUND

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FOREWORD AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The seeds for Common Ground were planted during a conversation between Nicholas Wade and Southern Alberta Art Gallery Curator Joan Stebbins regarding the evolution of his practice and various influences on his work. When he mentioned his admiration for the works of den Haag artist Jean van Wijk and Toronto artist Yvonne Lammerich, Stebbins wondered if there might be an exhibition in the making. Lammerich had spent several semesters as guest lecturer in the Art Department at the University of Lethbridge and Wade was introduced to van Wijk's work through a number of visits to the Netherlands. Wade's positive response resulted in this compelling international exhibition.

Prior to the exhibition, Jean van Wijk accepted Stebbins' invitation to participate in the SAAG's Intersection Residency Program at the Gushul Studio in Blairmore, Alberta. He and his partner, Marion spent a month in residence on the eastern edge of the Rocky Mountains where the artist photographed abandoned industrial mine sites and other remnants of the past. The following year he joined Nicholas Wade and Yvonne Lammerich in Lethbridge to create the exhibition Common Ground at the Southern Alberta Art Gallery.

We would like to thank Toronto Cultural critic Andrew Payne for the contribution of his essay and the thoroughness with which he explored the work of each of the participating artists. Payne generously travelled to Lethbridge for the exhibition opening where he led an engaging discussion of the artists' practices. We are grateful to Joan Stebbins for her part in the realization of this exhibition and catalogue and to Ryan Doherty for seeing the project through to fruition following her retirement. Stebbins worked closely with Andrew Payne and the artists on the final editing of his essay. Dana Woodward's sensitive handling of the design of this catalogue compliments the exhibition and furthers the reader's appreciation of the artists' work.

The Southern Alberta Art Gallery is indebted to The Canada Council for the Arts whose commitment to contemporary art production in Canada ensures that gallery audiences have meaningful encounters with a range of current practices. The Alberta Foundation for the Arts, the City of Lethbridge, our members, donors and volunteers all contribute to the realization of these experiences. In recognition of Jean van Wijk's participation in this project, Stroom den Haag provided generous support for this publication.

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Marilyn Smith
Executive Director

CONTAGION AND TRANSPORT OF THE MUSES: ART AT THE END OF SENSE AND WORLD

It is . . . the painter's task to make one see a kind of original unity of the senses and to cause a multi-sensible figure to appear visually. But this operation is possible only if the sensation of any particular domain . . . is directly plugged into a vital power that exceeds all domains and traverses them. This power is Rhythm. It will however be necessary to add that the "original unity of the senses" which is involved in this manner proves to be but the singular unity of a "between the sensuous domains", that essential communications turn out to take place in the element of outside-itself, of an ex-position of existence . . . and that "Rhythm" has its proper moment only in the gap of the beat that makes it into Rhythm. The general movement of the sensuous or of sense is the movement of this mimesis/methexis *among forms or presences that do not preexist it, definitively, but which arise from it*


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as such—and which raises them much less in relation to a "ground" (perhaps there is no ground for all these figures, no other "ground" than their differences) that it raises some in relation to others, all of them being thus grounds or figures for one another. Perhaps the "ground" is only the mimesis/methexis *according to which the arts or the senses of the arts endlessly meta-phorize each other. Contagion and transport of the Muses.*

– Jean-Luc Nancy, "Why Are There Several Arts"

Given both the protean nature and uncertain significance of contemporary art, the title to this exhibition, Common Ground, may be thought to represent a kind of provocation. To just what common task or enterprise should that title be thought to refer in a context apparently bereft of authoritative media and the stable forms of aesthetic consensus to which such media once gave rise? And on just what "ground" is this commonality asserted in an epoch characterized by nothing so much as by its disdain for any appeal to a foundation or ground? The contemporary philosopher Jean Luc Nancy offers a persuasive point of approach to these questions when he describes the unprecedented vocation for thinking and feeling that art acquires in our epoch of active nihilism, an epoch in which Nancy discerns an end of "the sense of the world" that is simultaneously an end of "the world of sense".[1]

At the terminus of this double blind alley of sense and world we discover according to Nancy that sense is nothing other than an excrescence of non-sense, even as we discover that our world is not in fact a world, but a heap, an accumulation of bits that no longer give themselves to be thought as bits of anything, as subject to any apparatus of cosmic gathering. The task Nancy assigns to the contemporary work of art in this context is one of actively presenting such an excrescence of sense out of nonsense, a presentation that involves capturing sense, that primitive conviction that a world coheres, prior

[1] "There is no longer any world: no longer a *mundus*, a cosmos, a composed and complete order (from) within which one might find a place, a dwelling, and the elements of an orientation … There is no longer any Spirit of the world, nor is there any history before whose tribunal one could stand. In other words, there is no longer a sense of the world."

to signification, at the very point of its emergence out of the inchoate flux of sensation: "Art disengages the senses from signification, or rather, it disengages the world from signification, and that is what we call "the senses" when we give to the (sensible, sensuous) senses the sense of being external to signification."

To this it needs immediately to be added that the senses whose disengagement from signification is at stake here should not be thought of as belonging to a single, finite subject; rather, these senses—and let us not be too quick to assert that there are only five-- emerge from the syncopation of tact and contact in which our singular corporeal destinies are originally interlocked, and the carnal complicity that this syncopation puts in play is thus thought by Nancy to represent an insuperable condition for the experience of the work of art. If Heidegger was the philosopher of existence as being one's own (an own-ness whose ultimate warrant is, on Heidegger's account, death), Nancy is *par excellence* the philosopher of being-with. The post-Heideggerian mandate that he assigns to the work of art is therefore one of forcing or cajoling, for it is a process by turns violent and seductive, the excrescence of sense out of the nonsensical propinquity of our sensate bodies. On his account, it is a mandate for affirming that this world, though no longer a world, is still a world of sorts, not the world as accomplished fact or consummate state of affairs, but rather the world as transitive imminence, a world still and always "to come" on the other side of its epoch or end.

Notwithstanding the messianic temporality that Nancy's invocation of a world "to come" suggests, a central dimension of this task that he assigns to the contemporary work of art concerns a radical re-conception not of time but of space. For it is only in accordance with this re-conception of space as, in his words, "what is coming toward us" in an opening that "is open on nothing but its own distance from nothing," that it becomes possible once more, in and beyond that active nihilism that defines our epoch, to speak of a world and of sense.

The commonality to which the title of this exhibition refers is the commonality implied by this shared task of producing worlds of sense in an age of active nihilism, and of bearing witness to the unprecedented experience of space that this productive genesis of sense implies. The question of how this productive genesis that now claims the name of art is situated relative to the accumulated

history of the established artistic disciplines, with their attendant media, is an important one for all three of the artists represented in this exhibition: Yvonne Lammerich, Nicholas Wade, and Jean van Wijk. In their respective responses to this question, Lammerich, van Wijk, and Wade all embrace a similar strategy of constellating artifacts conceived with a high level of craft (if often by very simple means) in a *dispositif* that provokes the event of sense at the very point where distinct artistic disciplines, with their distinct media and distinctly dimensioned plena corresponding to those media, touch, at the point where the virtual figure inscribed upon a plane passes over into the *haeccittas* of a more fulsomely dimensioned object, even as that object itself begins to assume the spectral aspect of a cipher or a sign. In what follows, I will trace those intermedial passages and the sense events to which they give rise through the singular contributions of these artists, connecting that singularity, wherever possible, to the broader commitments and enduring dedications that distinguish their respective trajectories.

Yvonne Lammerich,
Correspondence – Carousel, 2008

SEEING IS (NOT) BELIEVING: YVONNE LAMMERICH'S CORRESPONDENCE

> *I can indeed view the world from my fixed standpoint and apprehend it in depth, in perspective, and in the order of its differently extending directions. It may then be the stationary and inactive observer who lets the spectacle of the world pass by his eyes as on a screen. But in the contemplative situation my former activity of actually moving through space, of directing myself toward some goal, of correlating time used to distance covered, of measuring exertion against the vital results of change, all these and the always present possibility of performing the same acts again, underlie and impregnate that seemingly static presence of space which vision implies.*
>
> – Hans Jonas, The Phenomenon of Life: Toward a Philosophical Biology

Like many of her contemporaries, Lammerich has come to embace a multi-media installation practice that eschews Lessingesque appeals to the "purity" of particular arts, while at the same time avoiding any lapse into the crypto-vitalist enthusiams of the *Gesamkunstwerk*. Having said that, and despite her peregrinations through various practices and attendant media, painting

represents the source and essential touchstone for Lammerich's installation work. Above all, painting provides Lammerich with an exemplary medium for pursuing her ambition to produce a singular sense event from out of the limits imposed by the representational practices and codes that have determined the historical development of the established artistic disciplines. However, painting can assume this privilege in Lammerich's work only on the condition that we distance its future from the judgments and evaluative frameworks that have informed its authoritative past. As she puts it in a talk she delivered in 2005: "If to the question of painting today we naturally wish to bring judgments or evaluations, we quickly find ourselves at an impasse." But what, if not such judgments and evaluations, might this return to painting entail? According to Lammerich, it must entail first and foremost a summoning of modernity's sovereign gaze, with its special epistemological prerogatives, back to the parliament of the other senses. For Lammerich painting today represents the most unlikely but for that reason most compelling medium through which to achieve this re-somatization of optical experience---hence her description of her recent work as operating between the immediacy of the body's sensations and the formality of visual experience in such a way as to "fold" the totality of embodied sentience into the pictorial image.

Lammerich's approach to this project of re-somatizing the object of aesthetic judgment is distinguished by its neo-Cartesian emphasis on the trans-dimensional extensivity of the image, with the interlacing of optical, haptical, kinesthetic, and abstract-cognitive registers such extensivity implies. This places her work at a studied distance from that of the new sensualists in art and architecture, with their emphasis on the qualitative, extra-spatial aspects of sensory experience, those associated with colour in the visual register, and with texture, flavor, and aroma in its tactile and gastro-olfactory counterparts. This neo-Cartesian dimension of Lammerich's conception of painting is immediately apparent in the absolute privilege that her conception of the painter's craft gives to *disegno* over *colore*. Lammerich's is an resolutely graphic conception of painting as a practice of cutting into or inscribing an always simultaneously virtual and concrete surface, and as such one that imagines the medial conditions of this art to be on a continuum with those that have historically conditioned both linguistic and geometrical practice. This conception of painting is "abstract" in precisely the sense that Jacques Ranciere describes

when he says: "The type of painting that is poorly named abstract, and which is supposedly brought back to its own proper medium, is implicated in an overall vision of a new human being lodged in new structures, surrounded by different objects. Its flatness is linked to the flatness of pages, posters, and tapestries. It is the flatness of an interface."[2]

It was her interest in integrating painting into the totality of corporeal experience that led Lammerich, sometime around 2000, to produce works in which the pictorial image is imbricated with its architectural support, on the one hand, and the paradoxical materiality of textual media, on the other. This led her to an engagement with a question that had been central in discussions of art and architecture throughout the twentieth century, the question of the relationship between the spaces corresponding to artifacts in two and artifacts in three dimensions.[3]

Melancholia: Problems of Knowing 1 (2000) could be seen as a seminal work in this regard. A more recent work, *Belief* (2008), marks a consequential extension of this trajectory, probing the way in which our familiar sense of world, that salience of experience commanding immediate conviction or belief, transpires within a network of mental and material confines that complicate distinctions between res cogitans and res extensa, virtuality and actuality. Through alternate employment of three basics operations (cutting, inscribing, folding) performed on a corroplast surface, Lammerich produces an apparatus that places the viewer's gaze at the point of transition from painting to sculptural installation, from the figure in two dimensions to the figure in three. In doing so, she invites the viewer to reflect on the eidetic invariant whose schema endures this rite of dimensional passage, as well as on the role played by our sensate powers in maintaining that invariant across its multiple variations.

[2] Jacques Ranciere, "The Distribution of the Sensible," *The Politics of Aesthetics*, trans. Gabriel Rockhill (London/New York: Continuum Press, 2004) 16.

[3] Improvising a random list culled from a much more extensive series, we might adduce as instances of modernity's enduring preoccupation with this question: the displacement from the painted surface to the architectural constellation of surfaces that the pursuit of the elementarist principle ultimately implied for certain members of De Stijl; the search amongst minimalist artists like Robert Smithson, Robert Morris, and Richard Serra for an artifact that is neither painting nor sculpture, and whose apprehension would involve some complex working between the figuration of space in two and in three dimensions; John Hejduk's Wall houses; and Peter Eisenman's "axonometric model" for House Ten.

Correspondence, Lammerich's contribution to the *Common Ground* exhibition, represents a deliberate re-working of many of the elements and strategies first developed in *Problems of Knowing* and *Belief*. This practice of circling back on earlier works, advancing the questions they posed in novel directions, has been characteristic of Lammerich's entire career, a career distinguished by its tenacious pursuit of a few fundamental questions: what is a figure or form such that it can retain its identity across distinct dimensional milieux; what is it to inscribe, to cut, or to fold a surface; what is it to allow one's gaze to be captured by the figures that these operations of inscribing, cutting, and folding produce; and, finally, what does it mean that this gaze is situated within or at the edge of a body that is at once cut out of the space that surrounds it and folded around the space that forms its enigmatic interior?

Correspondence consists of three pieces: *Letters*, and *Chair* and *Carousel*. Each of these three components involves the carving of a silhouette on a vertical partition and the subsequent projection of the figure described by that silhouette into the space unto which the partition faces. The discussion that follows will focus on the first of these pieces, since it seems to me to present in a more compelling fashion than do the other two works, the fundamental preoccupations that inform the entire constellation.

Artistic legend has it that the origin of painting is to be found in the practice of silhouette-making and it is worth considering *Correspondence*, if only for a moment, as a kind of wry reflection on and subtle subversion of the terms of this legend. This origin myth has its source in Pliny the Elder's Naturalis Historia. In book XXXV of that work, Pliny remarks:

> *It was through the surface that modeling portraits in clay was first invented by Britades, a potter of Sicyon, at Corinth. He did this owing to his daughter, who was in love with a young man; and she, when he was going abroad, drew in outline on the wall the shadow of his face thrown by a lamp. Her father pressed clay on this and made a relief, which he hardened by exposure to fire with the rest of his pottery; and it is said*

that this likness was preserved in the shrine of the Nymphs until the defeat of Corinth by Mummius.[4]

In was in the eighteenth century that the contour drawn by Bratides' daughter began to serve as allegorical emblem not for the origin of sculptural relief, as in Pliny, but for the origin of painting. A whole series of eighteenth and nineteenth century painters extending from Suvée to Schinkel depict the legend, and always with the implicit implication that the motivations that stand at the origin of painting are to be found in a form of object attachment far more primitive and affectively charged than that "disinterested interest" first advocated in Kant's critique of aesthetic judgment. For the tradition that flourished just prior to Kant's transformative intervention into the field of aesthetics, painting is a product of passion, not of disinterested reflection; it is an act of love, more precisely, of love that has survived the disappearance of its initiating object. Its strong association with the sentimentalist aesthetics of the eighteenth century notwithstanding, this conception of the motivations that drive men to produce and to look at paintings has roots in ancient and Renaissance theories of art. In his fifteenth century treatise, On Painting, Leon Battista Alberti already communicates an acute sense of this more primitive form of attachment to the painted object, a sense in this instance apparently informed less by Pliny's account of painting's origin than by first Aristotle and then Cicero's accounts of how the love of a friend can bestow a sort of quasi immortality on the beloved. In the second book of his treatise, Alberti describes painting as a device for simulating animacy so as to produce an event of psychic compensation in which the loss of a loved object is ameliorated through the introduction of a symbolic substitute: "Painting contains a divine force which not only makes absent men present, as friendship is said to do, but moreover makes the dead seem almost alive."[5]

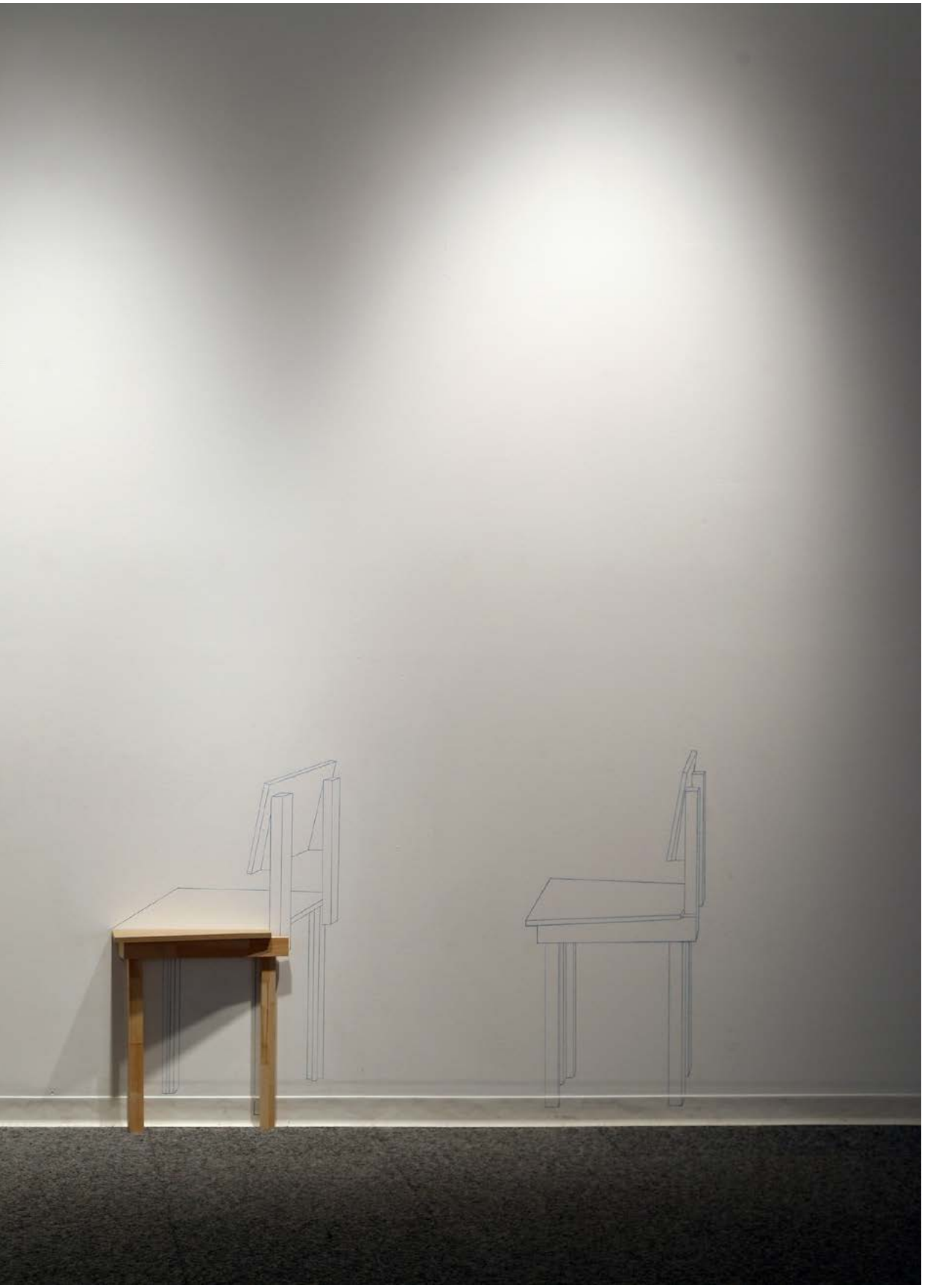
[4] Pliny the Elder, Natural History, vol. XXXV, 43, pp. 371-373.

[5] Alberti's comparison of the power of the painted image with the power of friendship is a nod to Cicero's De amicitia (vii,23). Behind Cicero stands Aristotle, who in his treatise on friendship also describes how the friend, through the exercise of a mnemic power that spans the abyss separating the living from the dead, confers a kind of immortality and permanent presence on the dead or departed other. Alberti's copy of De amicitia can still be found in the Bibloteca San Marco in Venice. Shakespeare's Winter Tale also describes the power of art to mimic and even supplant the divine art of resurrecting or restoring those whom death has divided from us.

Yvonne Lammerich,
Correspondence – Chair (detail), 2008

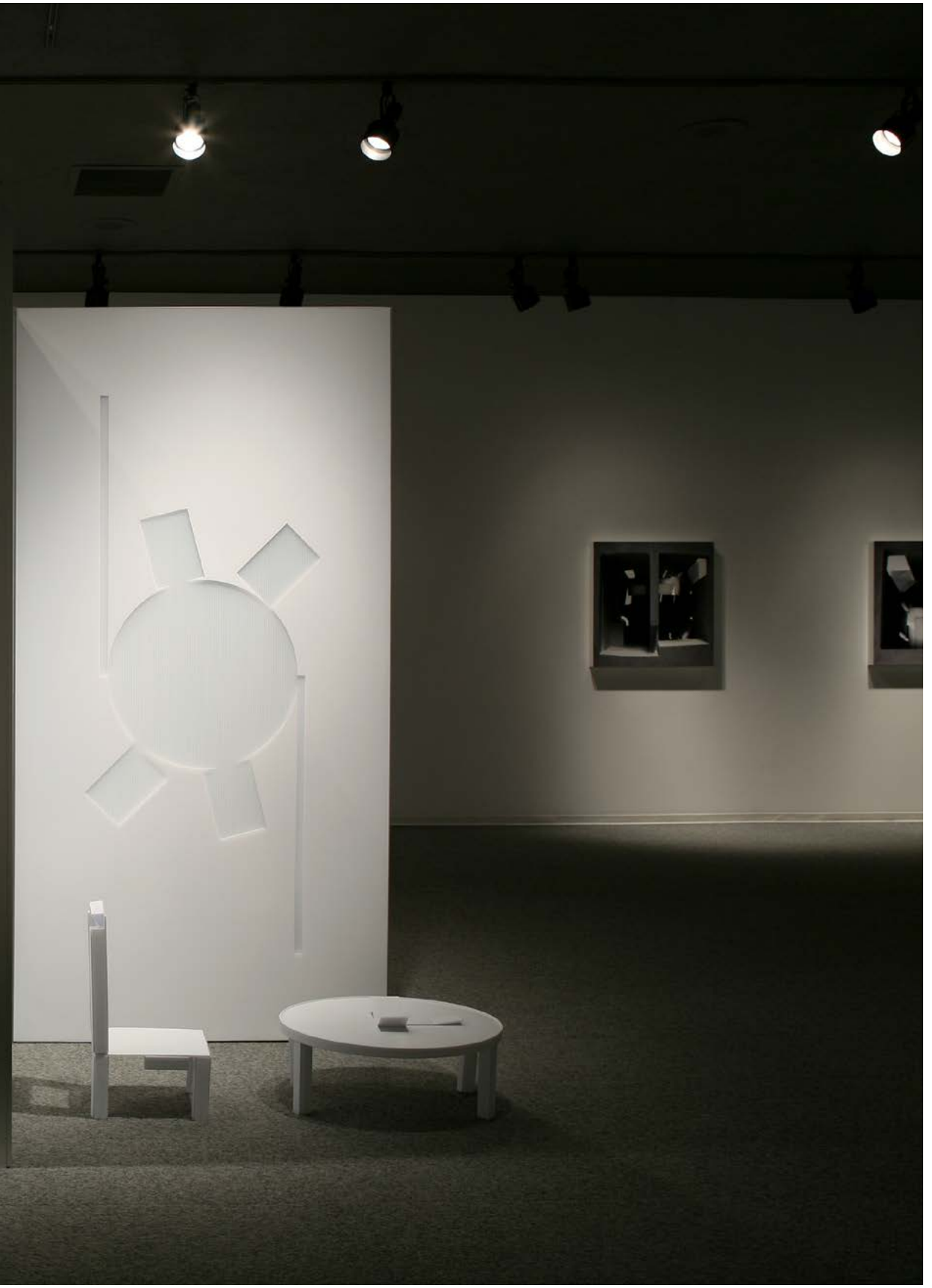
What is peculiar to the paintings in which this allegorical origin of the painted image is staged is the implication that pictorial simulation is amplified by the indexical and not merely mimetic significance of the silhouette as against other forms of graphic depiction. The silhouette does not merely resemble its original, it bears witness to the fact that this original once stood near, as near as a body stands to its own shadow. It is just this that gives it its efficacy in the imaginary ruses of the grieving lover, for whom it serves as a second and less inconstant shadow. With that in mind, perhaps the most striking thing about Lammerich's take on painting as an art of the silhouette is the reversal of temporal direction it affects. In her hands, the silhouette has not a commemorative, but a projective efficacy; it is an image not of what has been and must return, but rather of what, never having been, must come to be, and come to be in the form of a *typus* that is infinitely iterable. In Lammerich's silhouette's we encounter the figure not as prosopopeiac prop, but as prototype. To that extent, Lammerich's silhouettes probably owe more to the ascetic lineaments of the Purist object type than to the elegiac tracings inscribed by Pliny's Corinthian maid. As *Carousel* perhaps makes most readily apparent, the traced figure serves here not as mnemo-erotic device but as productive schema, at once methodical demonstration and technical application. As in the allegorizations of the art of painting described above, the indexical dimension is central to the relationship between the graphic semblance and its ontological original; however, it acquires a very different significance in this work. Here its role is not that of lending auratic authority to the figure, elevating it to the status of a relic or residuum of the longed for object. Rather, by underlining the material continuity that traverses the difference between model and object, the figure in two and the figure in three dimensions, the silhouette that Lammerich deploys in *Carousel* invites us to ponder the particular role that the related operations of inscribing, cutting, and folding each have in the differentiation of that continuity. It is, we might say, the graphic allegorization of a purely formal origin of both sculpture and painting, one in which a certain depthless surface offers itself as the material matrix for an inscriptive act that does not mimic, but models the world of extended things. To the tension that *Carousel* produces between the figure in two and the figure in three dimensions must be added the kinesthetic dimension that is implied by the varied heights of the table and chair models that occupy the work's four quadrants, an implication underlined in the work's title.

Yvonne Lammerich,
Correspondence – Chair, 2008



Yvonne Lammerich,
Correspondence – Letter, 2008

Yvonne Lammerich,
Correspondence – Carousel, 2008



Nicholas Wade,
The Study v.3, 2008

BETWEEN LIGHT AND SHADOW, OBJECT AND MILIEU: THE ART OF NICHOLAS WADE

The day all faced with light
inside the room makes eye re-
flective see the common world
as one again no outside coming
in no more than walls . . .

– Robert Creeley, Helsinki Window

Nicholas Wade's installation work is distinguished by an enduring fascination with the camera obscura device, a fascination informed by his understanding of this device as fundamentally architectural in nature, that is, as a constellation of vertical partitions that serve to create a darkened interior into which light may be poured in a very restricted and exacting manner so as to produce on the inner face of one of these partitions a two dimensional simulacrum of the very sensorium from which this interior has been sequestered. Wade's interest in the architecture supporting the camera obscura image is anything but a merely technical curiosity. Rather, what seems to have captured his imagination, like that of many of his scholarly contemporaries, is the camera obscura's status as objective correlative of the forms of mental interiority associated with the modern subject and as such a kind of exemplar of the sense praxes connate with the emergence of that subject. Jonathan Crary, who is among the

constellation of contemporary scholars who have advanced our understanding of the relationship between the camera obscura apparatus and modernity's subject, identifies the former as the technical exemplar of that "world-picture" Heidegger described as the projective counterpart to Descartes' cogito. "For Heidegger," Crary tells us, "… the picture . . . does not simply imply a new priority of vision. Rather, what belongs to the essence of the picture is standing together, system . . . a unity that develops out of the projection of the objectivity of what is. This is the same unity of the camera obscura."[6]

In keeping with Crary's assessment of its significance, the camera obscura serves in Wade's work as a synecdoche of the entire complex of spatial distributions and material configurations that today support the fashioning of our plural sense worlds into a world-picture, and his project may be described as one of of tinkering with the apparatuses productive of this picture in such a way as to restore our sentience of that original plurality. Wade's most explicit exploration of the camera obscura device can be found in *The Study, v.2*, an immediate precursor to one of the works in the exhibition presently under discussion.

A second and intimately related model for Wade's spatial constructs is the scholar's study, of which the artist's studio may be thought to be a close cousin. The study is of course a privileged setting in early modern painting, from Antonella da Messina's *Saint Jerome in his Study* (1473-1475) to the successive depictions of contemplative seclusion that Rembrandt undertook between 1630 (*St. Paul at his Desk*) and 1633 (*Old Man in an Interior with a Winding Staircase*, alias *The Philosopher in Contemplation*). Interestingly, the immediate precursor to *Study, v.2, Study*, 2000 is a three-dimensional model of Messina's painting.

In recent years, Wade's preoccupation with both the contemplative enclave and the camera obscura has been manifested in the production of two distinct classes of object operating at distinct scales. The first type of object, typically produced at a scale commensurate with or smaller than the human body, is composed of a complex of perforated surfaces whose openings distribute light and shadow in such a way as to render the distinction between the object

[6] "Techniques of the Observer," OCTOBER, vol. 45, summer 1988, MIT press, pp. 3-35.

and its surroundings indeterminate or ambiguous. Sometimes hung on the wall and sometimes placed on the floor, these objects beg to be read with reference to the traditions of painting and sculpture. *Downlights focus attention on objects* (two printed newsprint pads, each 16 x 16 x 8") exhibited at the S. L. Simpson Gallery in Toronto in 1981 could be said to be representative of this first class of object. The second type of object is likewise comprised of a system of intersecting surfaces with strategically placed openings. Here too the surfaces of the object are deployed as much with a view to their potential for optical performance (viz. their capacity to distribute light and shadow) as to the geometrical figure that they impress upon the viewer's gaze. Finally, as in the case of the first class of object, the distribution of light and shadow is here calculated to raise questions about where the work ends and where its encompassing milieu begins. However, in this second object type, the constellation of openings and enclosures, transparent and opaque surfaces is undertaken at the scale of a minimal architecture, so that the relationship of the optico-architectural apparatus to the body of the spectator is quite distinct. The two works that comprise Wade's contribution to *Common Ground*, *Pouring Rooms* and *The Study, v.3: The Building and Its Skin* are respectively representative of these two classes of object.

Pouring Rooms takes the plan of a "work space" familiar to the artist, extrudes its partition lines, and presents it, vertically reoriented, at a different scale (52" x 36" x 14"). As a result, it reads as a wall work whose organizing lineaments appear in relief. In his description of the development of this work, Wade reveals that from his earliest engagement with this object, he was less concerned with its formal or iconographic qualities than with its potentials as an apparatus or instrument, albeit an instrument whose exact function was not merely uncertain, but subject to successive transformations. According to Wade, he had first used the object as a kind of ad hoc storage unit, fitting "papers and things" into its interlocking enclosures. Somewhat later, he put it to a second use, employing it as a model for testing different lighting conditions. This second employment recalls the artist's enduring fascination with the camera obscura and perhaps it was this association that led Wade to conceive it as a kind of "talisman" which helped him to "focus on the qualities, light, scale, and material of any space." The ultimate translation of this multi-purpose object into a work of art was on Wade's account performed by a supplemental operation: the addition of a series

of circular perforations drilled into the sides of the work's extruded lineaments. Whereas the single punctum around which the camera obscura organizes itself frames the passage between darkened interior and luminous exterior in such a way as to produce within the former an exact image, albeit in reverse, of the latter, Wade's optical dispositif eschews these effects of verisimilitude and the strict separation of interior and exterior spaces such effects require. Multiplying and enlarging the apertures through which light may pass between interior and exterior, Wade produces not an image but an ambience in which the object seems to bleed into its immediate surroundings, or better, perhaps, to incorporate the space immediately surrounding it in something like the way an angel may be thought to incorporate its halo.

As its title suggests, *The Study, v.3: The Building and It's Skin* extends the explorations of the contemplative enclave and the camera obscura successively pursued in *The Study*, 2000 and *The Study, v.2*. The work consists of an 8' x 8' square fir frame, the entirety of which is covered by fabric interfacing. The frame is in-filled with spruce studs and hardboard panels alternating with wall sections covered by plastic mini blinds. The four walls of the structure are aligned with the primary interior surfaces of the gallery. The structure's internal volume is populated by a number of potted palms, a glass table with a water pitcher resting on its surface, and a chair. Like the frame of the enclosing structure, the glass table's frame is made of fir and clearly echoes the former's structural disposition, albeit at a smaller scale. In addition to the palms, the pitcher, and the table and chair, the structure's interior holds three grow lights, two of which are aimed at the palms, so that they cast a shade on the east and south interface walls, and the other of which is positioned to throw the shadows of the table and the water pitcher onto the North wall. In addition, two fans are directed at the potted palms, so that they and their shadows are in a constant, if subtle, state of motion. Finally, a video projection, which repeats itself at 56 minute intervals, fills the east window. The projection superimposes two images: the first, an image of a pair of hands building a model of a three-story structure out of scrap wood in an outdoor fireplace; the second, the image of this same model being consumed by flames in the same outdoor fireplace. The shadows cast by the fronds of the potted plants offer a third layer to this spectral palimpsest, producing a kind of visual analogy between the movement of the flames and the movement of the fronds. These same shadows are also cast on the window

of the south wall. Like *Pouring Rooms*, *The Study, v.3* could be described as a schematic representation or model of a work space.[7] Once again, the provision of this space is understood as involving a very careful calibration of light and shadow, interior and exterior space. Here, however, the volumetric experience unfolds at a scale that is sufficient to absorb the spectator's body, thereby calling on the spectator to correlate the experience of the work as a freestanding object viewed from the exterior with his or her experience of it as an at once intimate and immersive enclosure. That correlation is complicated by the spectral communications that pass from one side of this membrane structure to the other, so that the skin to which the title of this work refers serves simultaneously as the locus for the articulation of the difference between interior and exterior, light and shadow, seclusion and visibility and as the medium in which a virtual traversal of those differences is affected.

There is another feature of these works that warrants our attention, and that is their somewhat unglamorous, makeshift quality. How does the makeshift quality of these works, and of *The Study, v.3* in particular, square with my earlier comment concerning the high level of craftsmanship that distinguishes the work of all three of the artists represented in this exhibition? In answer to that question, I would say that while Saint Thomas Aquinas and Mies van der Rohe may both be correct in their assertions that God is in the details, it is probably not less true to say that He is in some details more than in others. It is to the godlier details that Wade's craft is characteristically directed, by which we may understand those details in which the point or stake of the demonstration is less communicated than experienced, and experienced as the edge or brink of significance. These works are traps designed to capture that rarest of contemplative prey, the event of sense's genesis prior to its enlistment in the order of categories and concepts, propositions and terms.

[7] It is worth mentioning that the two works that precede Study, v.3, Study, v.1 and Study, v.2, are, respectively, explicit explorations of the contemplative enclave and the camera obscura device.

Nicholas Wade,
Pouring Rooms, 2008

Nicholas Wade,
(left) *The Study v.3*, 2008
(right) *Pouring Rooms*, 2008

Nicholas Wade,
The Study v.3 (detail), 2008

Jean van Wijk
Le Matin, 2005

WHERE THE SKIN OF THE PHOTOGRAPH MEETS THE FLESH OF THE WORLD: THE ART OF JEAN VAN WIJK

For three decades now, Jean van Wijk has been producing work that utilizes para-architectural techniques and media to explore both formal-aesthetic and cultural-semantic aspects of the built environment and the artifacts that populate it. Working between two- and three- dimensional media, van Wijk's early works characteristically employed effects of framing and radical juxtapositions of scale to reveal unobserved connections between apparently disparate places and conditions. Invariably, the human body, and the differentiation of interior and exterior space that it articulates, stands at the centre of these early explorations.

The German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk reminds us that in the biblical account creation involves in the first instance the creation of a vessel—the Adamic body--capable of containing animacy or spirit, a veritable "jug of life." In this account, the ceramicist becomes the type of the creator, with the interior of the human body then serving as the origin and model for every subsequent act of spatial containment. (Bubbles, 33-340). As Sloterdijk remarks: "Men practiced their first idea of being-hollow, of being-containers, of being-passages, by producing ceramic vases." Perhaps not surprisingly, many of Sloterdijk's subsequent

meditations on the cosmic projection of this figure of the hollow man onto the external world enlist architectural examples. In keeping with this introjective dimension of the traditional conception of the Adamic body as microcosmos, Van Wijk's early works offer a sustained, if often implicit,analogy between the interior of the human body and the architectural interior articulated at its multiple scales. A correlative of this analogy is the analogy that his work draws between the surfaces that contour the external world and the skin that encases the human body's interior. However, to render Sloterdijk's commentary on the human body as first vessel apt for a discussion of van Wijk's work, we would need to add that this body is, no less than the prosthetic bodies we design to enclose it and to amplify its powers, a leaky vessel, a porous body populated by orifices that serve as so many indices of its unseen depths, so many peepholes rendering it at once vulnerable and enigmatic. In these early works, the analogy between corporeal interior and architectural interior marks out the place of a meditation on the relationship between public and private experience, even as the human skin cum architectural surface serves as the site for a super-positioning of the intimate and the theatrical, the near and the distant, the void and the superficies that obscure it.

Hear or imagine and hear, a work produced in 1999 represents a case in point. First realized in the series "Acoustic Architecture-Architectural Acoustics," published as part of the Vedute collection of three-dimensional manuscripts, "this work consists of a book whose eleven leaves form, when laid upon one another, the model of a Greek ampitheatre, according to van Wijk, "the first loudspeaker in western culture." As one lifts and turns the pages of this book, the image of the ampitheatre is gradually transformed, as if by a process of tomographic metapmorphosis, into the image of a human head in profile. According to van Wijk, the work marks the superimposition of two events in the human experience of sonority, both of which are organized around the figure of a hollow or void. The first such event is collective and historically unique: it concerns the invention of the ampitheatre as a kind of acoustic prosthetic giving rise to new forms of public experience; the second is individual and endlessly iterated: it concerns the transmission of the vibrations produced by the eardrum to the brain and the forms of mnemic experience arising therefrom. As van Wijk describes it in his own discussion of the work; "Both in scale and time the two moments could not be more distant from one another. On the other hand,

sound becoming public and sound becoming personal represent key moments in cultural experience, and they are inextricably intertwined."

Now what is especially characteristic of this early work is van Wijk's sensitivity to the role that the built environment has as the universal medium for this intertwining of public and private experience, and his attention to the continuities and affinities that link the various spatial scales at which this medium unfolds. An especially salient example is his *Project for a Protestant Church in The Hague*, produced in 2006. The work consisted of photo documentation of a figure walking out from the exact centre—marked by a cross—of a Protestant Church and moving in the four cardinal directions, according to van Wijk's own description of the project, "out of the Netherlands into Germany to the East, Belgium to the South, the North Sea towards England in the West, and the North Sea towards the North Pole in the North." The photos showed the person at the very point of crossing these "national" borders next to a detailed aerial view. Beneath the photos ran a legend enumerating all the national borders that the itineraries of these four walkers would traverse if they continued. As van Wijk himself observes, this work "evokes the notion of borders at many different scales and levels, a notion of crossing, letting in, leaving out, both oneself and the other." Border, threshold, aperture: these are the social instruments, the conduits of passage thanks to which the small and the large, the private and the public, the intimate and the spectacular are intertwined. It is on and through and across these instruments, and within and between the bodies that they mobilize, that what Nancy describes as the excrescence of sense out of the nonsensical propinquity of our sensate bodies occurs. Van Wijk's practice might be described as one of bearing witness to this occurrence using photographic and sculptural means.

In the more recent work, the cultural-semantic dimension of van Wijk's projecty seem largely to have receded in favour of an exploration of the formal-aesthetic dimensions of spatial experience. This brings the concerns of his work into closer conformity with those that animate the works of Lammerich and Wade. In particular, these recent works share with those of Lammerich and Wade an interest in the capacity of eidetic phenomena to traverse the distinction between two- and three- dimensions, producing in that traversal an equivocation of presentational and representational, concrete and virtual modalities of

Jean van Wijk
Cella, 2008

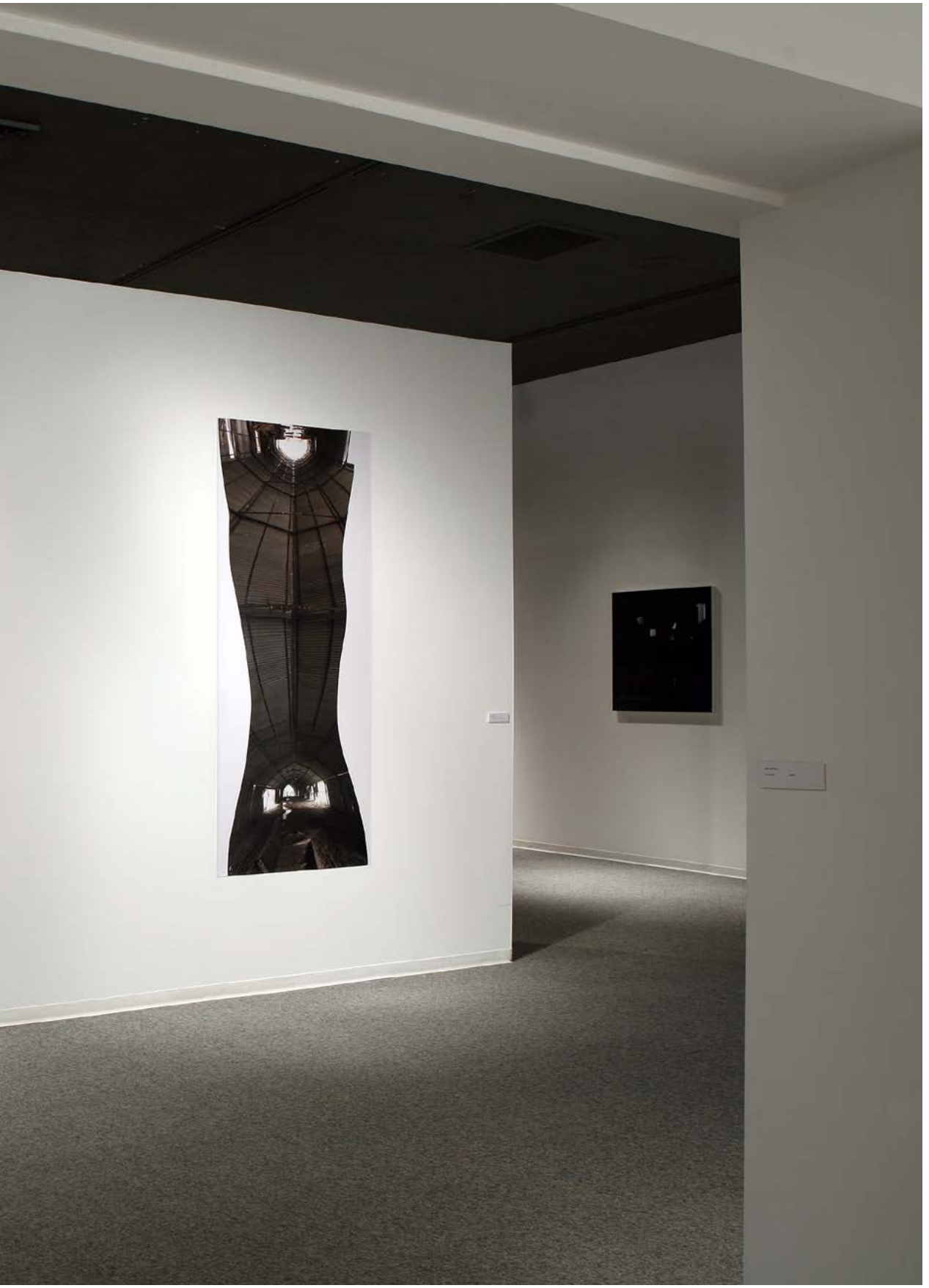
spatial expression. This is especially apparent in the *Cella* series of sculpted photographs that van Wijk exhibits in *Common Ground*. Depicting a kind of architecture degree zero consisting solely of the juxtaposition of light and shadow, voids and planar surfaces, these works are reminiscent of Constructivist and De Stijl explorations of the border separating painting and architecture.

The works were constructed according to a three part process involving the use of two and three dimensional media. The first part of the process involved the construction of a set of architectural models out of wood. The models were then photographed from a number of angles and under a variety of lighting conditions. Prints of these photographs were then mounted on wooden boxes into which van Wijk had strategically cut cubic openings, so that the orthogonal geometry of the boxes, and the play of light and shadow, planar surface and void that it sets in play, echoes uncannily the geometrical and optical features of the spaces depicted in the photographs. The result is a kind of apparitional enigma in which two-dimensional and three-dimensional figures seem to coexist on a virtual plane that is also a field. The link between these explorations of what might be called the spatiality of vision and the central concerns of both Lammerich and Wade's work should be clear enough. However, whereas the work of both Lammerich and Wade tends to be analytical or methodical in spirit (so that the works often assume the guise of an experiment or demonstration), van Wijk's way of proceeding is more intuitive, and the chord that these works strike in the viewer is at once more contemplative and more lyrical. Something about the play of cubic blocks of light and shadow in these photo-sculptures suggests a more claustrophobic space or a dimly lit Ronchamp Chapel; an air of solitude and solemnity presides over them and separates their mood and tone from that of Lammerich and Wade.

Jean van Wijk
(left) *Chambre Claire 1*, 2008
(right) *Chambre Claire 2*, 2008

Jean van Wijk
(left) *Twain*, 2007
(middle) *Services*, 2008
(right) *Sotto Voce*, 2008

Jean van Wijk
(left) *Le Matin*, 2005
(right) *Coalmine*, 2008



LAST WORDS

In my earlier discussion of Yvonne Lammerich's contribution to Common Ground, *I suggested that her work is organized around the pursuit of a few fundamental questions: what is a figure or form such that it can retain its identity across distinct dimensional milieu? What is it to inscribe, to cut, or to fold a surface? What is it to allow one's gaze to be captured by the figures that these operations of inscribing, cutting, and folding produce? What, finally, does it mean that this gaze is situated within or at the edge of a body that is at once cut out of the space that surrounds it and folded around the space that forms its enigmatic interior?*

In different ways, the work of Wade and van Wijk can be understood as in pursuit of answers to this same series of questions. In all three artists, the work of art is conceived as a trans-medial practice promising a new distribution of the sensible, to borrow Jacques Ranciere's very apt phrase, an interminable ungrounding and regrounding of the common in which space is always the space between bodies, and in which sense finds its origin in the carnal complicities linking these bodies to each other.

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Andrew Payne

Yvonne Lammerich,
Belief 1 (detail), 2008

YVONNE LAMMERICH

Yvonne Lammerich is an artist currently based in Toronto. Her work has been exhibited nationally and internationally since the 1980's, including Gallery Clara Maria Sels, Dusseldorf Germany, Le Musée de Quebec Univers Urban (1998), and *Problems of Knowing* shown at the Québec International Biennale, 2000. Since moving to Toronto she has contributed a major installation, *Island*, to the *Nature in the Garage Project*, Toronto (2006) and mounted a solo exhibition, *Belief*, at Diaz Contemporary in 2008. In 2010 she co-produced (with Ian Carr-Harris) the project *Copy This* for the exhibition Art School Dismissed, Toronto 2010 and participated in a two person show Incidentally held at The Nunnery Gallery, London UK in 2011. Also that year she initiated the TMCA project, a hybrid virtual Museum presented in the exhibition entitled *It takes everyone to know no one* at the Barnicke Gallery (2011). June 2012 was the launching of the *Ideal House Project*, (co-produced with Ian Carr Harris) shown at Design at Riverside (Waterloo School of Architecture) affiliated with Cambridge Art Galleries.

Lammerich has also curated exhibitions and written for catalogues and art publications such as Parachute, Canadian Art and Contemporary Magazine, London UK. She took part in the Banff residency *The Future of Idea Art* in 2006, and most recently taught at Zayed University in Dubai 2010-2011. She graduated from the Ontario College of Art and has a PhD (in Art History) from the Université du Québec à Montréal. Her work is represented in private and public collections.

For Lammerich, her practice investigates and articulates the simultaneity of experiencing the body's response as we navigate both real and projected space. She is specifically interested in illusion as defined by materiality and consciousness. Through her practice, Lammerich articulates a paradigm shift in the way we become aware of how the senses, including non-visual senses, define aesthetic experience.

Nicholas Wade,
The Study v.2, 2006

NICHOLAS WADE

Nicholas Wade grew up in Kingston, Ontario where he attended St. Lawrence College studying studied printmaking and sculpture. In the late 70's at York Uni- versity, Toronto, he specialized in intaglio, then moved to Banff where he was administrative assistant to Takao Tanabe, head of the art program, as he continued doing printmaking and sculpture. In 1981 he began to show with S.L. Simpson Gallery in Toronto and completed his MFA at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in Halifax

Wade has had extensive teaching experience, including at Queen's University, Kingston; David Thompson University Centre, Nelson; Brock University, St. Catharines; Tyler School of Art, Philadelphia; and The Nova Scotia College of Art, Halifax before moving to Lethbridge in 1994 where he taught from '94 to 2011.

In 2005 he installed his first permanent public art work entitled *The Illumination* in the Millennium Library in the heart of Winnipeg. In that year he also was one of a number of Alberta Artists representing the province at Alberta Scene in Ottawa during Alberta's Centennial Year. He has exhibited in most major Canadian Cities and has work in the Canada Council Art Bank, Nova Scotia Art Bank and the Alberta Foundation for the Arts.

Wade remains committed to researching ways in which domestic forms and architectural structures have evolved from human gestures, intuitive perceptions and interactions between the body and the natural environment. In his work he has sought to derive architectural embraces from typography, body images from buildings and the enigma of a half-filled bowl, from a dream.

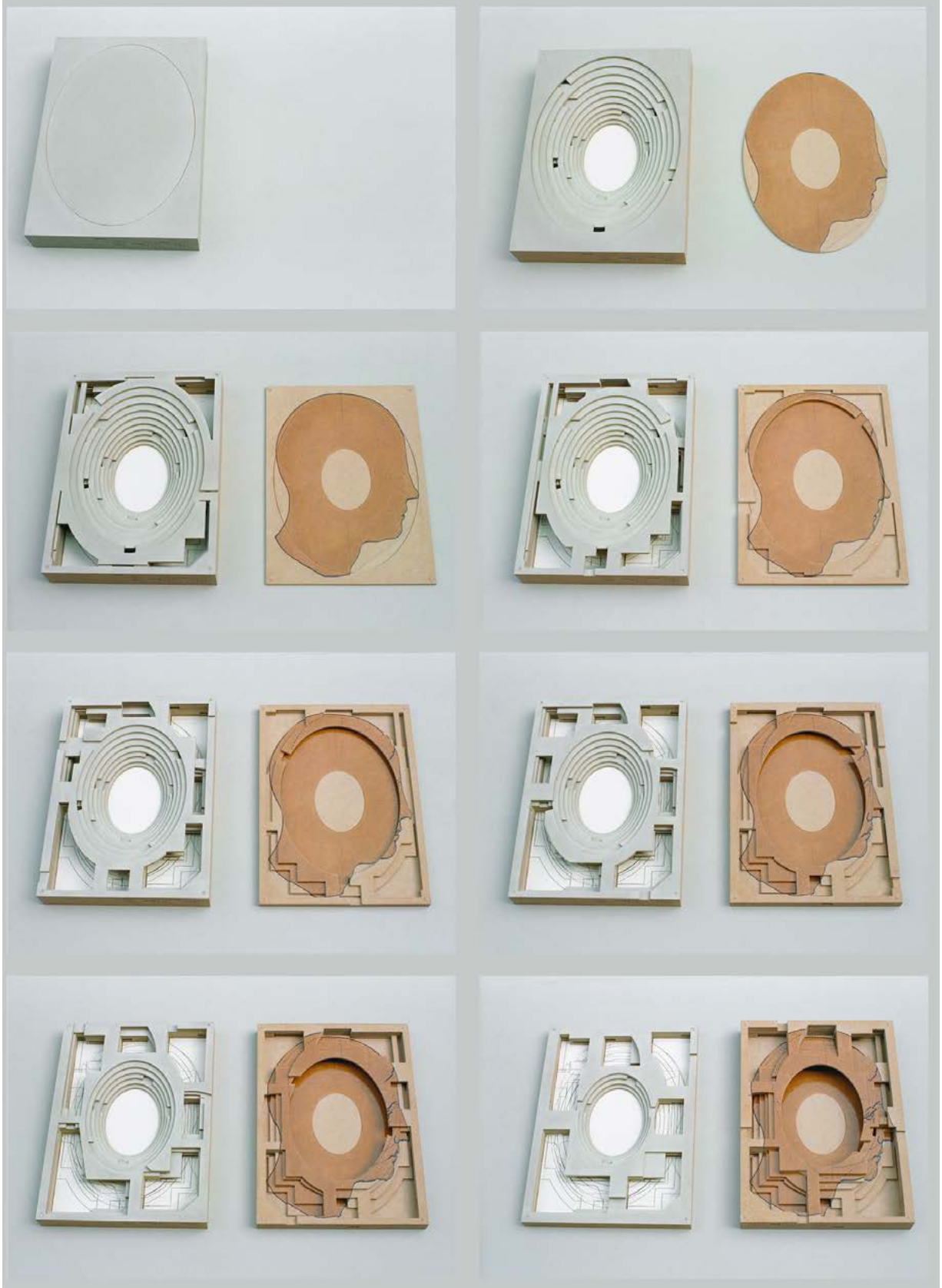
Jean van Wijk,
Hear or imagine and,1999

JEAN VAN WIJK

Dutch artist Jean van Wijk was born in Brussels (1953), grew up in Rotterdam, and now lives and works in The Hague, the Netherlands.

His work considers architectural space as a social construct. Imagination leads him to create new realities from everyday subjects and objects. As an artist he is fascinated with the relationship between the inner and outer worlds, and their varying interfaces: the human organic skin and senses juxtaposed with the constructed architectural skin, including language especially in its canonical forms. Using various techniques, in his recent work he explores basic elements of architectural space by way of imaginary models.

Jean van Wijk has completed a number of commissioned projects in relation to the public realm and architecture. He has shown his work across the Netherlands, and in Paris and New York. He recently received the Heden prize at the city of The Hague in recognition of his practice. Recent exhibitions have been installed The Hague at JCA de Kok, Heden, and Artoteek Den Haag, in Rotterdam at Phoebus Gallery and Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen and elsewhere, all continuing to explore his thinking of architectural, scenic and linguistic phenomena as interfaces between personal and collective processes.



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