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FRAGILE NATURE: Brent Bukowski (BC) and Kathryn Ward (ON)

January 15th to April 2, 2006

Keith and Winifred Shantz Gallery and the Donald and Pamela Bierstock Gallery



Installation - Brent Bukowski

Fragile Nature brings together the work of these two artists set up in such a way as to encourage discourse on the ideas and questions about landscape, nature and culture. Their complementary but divergent approach to these topics, and the contrast in how they incorporate glass, natural and industrial materials creates a dynamic exhibition with great appeal to a broad audience.

Bukowski's installation *A Piece of the Pie* examines the expansion of world consumption in a form that contrasts current statistical patterns to those of fifty years ago. This series identifies the wasteful use of resources, labour and capital and the consequential strains on the standard of living and the environment.

The individual sculptures comprising *A Piece of the Pie* employs the imagery of opposing pie charts in order to display and compare the statistical difference spanning the last 50 years. Variables explored include the consumption of natural resources, industrial output, population growth, food production and pollution. In order to create these "pie graphs"



Installation Detail - Brent Bukowski



Detail - Brent Bukowski



Untitled IV - Kathryn Ward



Bukowski layers broken and cut glass in and around metal assemblages. The frames are constructed in two parts using the circular metal lids of discarded hot water heaters. The two parts are then connected, creating a dynamic composition in metal and glass of the pattern in study.

Together the series of works display the increase in our patterns of consumption, its effects on the environment and the inequality of its distribution. As exhibited in the Bierstock Gallery *A Piece of the Pie* evokes the encroaching of industrial and urban development on the natural world. The concentrated arrangement of the sculptures underscores the depletion, destruction and decimation of natural resources. We are running out of space, out of resources, out of nature. And when they are gone, nothing will remain.

Kathryn Ward's assemblages bring forth another aspect of the exploration of the significance of nature and landscape within our contemporary context. Natural elements have a way of living through human interference and natural obstructions, though some can't survive. The life cycles of trees and plants and the impact that individuals make on the environment inspires her and her art is intended to cause the viewer to consider how their actions can make a difference to the natural world around them. Natural elements are integrated within constructed environments or have glass and other materials inserted within them. The use of glass is deliberate as it is fragile material but also one of great strength that can assume a myriad of different forms and shapes. By asserting it within the works as a compositional juxtaposition element, it creates an element of tension and subtly reminds us of the balance needed for harmonious and sustainable living. Her work questions society's valuation (and subsequent conservation or extermination) of certain species depending on what we decide to name it.

Ward's component of the exhibition is arranged with the objects at a fairly low level - one happens upon them much as one would find a nest or something in



Untitled III - Kathryn Ward

the woods when going out for a walk. The vast space around them emphasizes their fragility and reinforces the fact that nature is being threatened, at risk of being lost. Ward also uses the nest also to represent home and safety, and in effect the works become little "islands" of respite in the midst of a world that can be overwhelming.

Together, Bukowski's and Ward's works create a meaningful dialogue, addressing subjects that resonate on personal and global levels.

We acknowledge the special project support for Fragile Nature by the Ontario Arts Council.

The Gallery dedicates the Fragile Nature exhibition to the memory of [Len Gertler](#).

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