

PRESS RELEASE

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OPENING

Friday, June 4, 2004

Biennale of Sydney 2004

LUNCH

Friday, June 4, 2004

Consulate General of Canada
Sydney, New South Wales, Australia

TALKS

Sunday, June 6, 2004

SYLVIE GILBERT + CATHERINE RICHARDS
Museum of Contemporary Art
Sydney, New South Wales, Australia



THE SAIDYE BRONFMAN CENTRE FOR THE ARTS AT THE BIENNALE OF SYDNEY 2004

June 4 to August 15, 2004

Selected Canadian artist: Catherine Richards

The Liane and Danny Taran Gallery of the Saidye Bronfman Centre for the Arts is proud to announce its selection by the Biennale of Sydney 2004 to act as Canadian Commissioner for the prestigious international art event's 14th edition.

Under the helm of General Curator Isabel Carlos, the Biennale of Sydney 2004 will explore the theme **On Reason and Emotion**. Inspired by the innovative research of neuroscientist António Damásio in the field of the biology of reason, Carlos is leading the Biennale into the promising area of emotions. Sydney, a sophisticated city situated at the edge of the southern world, will become the stage for artists whose work changes our way of seeing, feeling and experiencing.

It is in this context that the Liane and Danny Taran Gallery is supporting the presentation of the interactive new technology installation work **I was scared to death/I could have died of joy**, by Ottawa artist Catherine Richards, in the Biennale of Sydney 2004.

Composed of two large glass tubes placed on stainless steel tables at opposite ends of a gallery space, **I was scared to death/I could have died of joy** materializes the two emotional extremities expressed by its title. Each tube encloses a delicate glass model of the right and left lobes of a brain with a trailing spinal column. The glass tubes are filled with a gas that, when excited by electrons, produces ringed columns of plasma: one white-mauve, the other maroon/red. When touched by the viewer, the columns of light glow and pulsate in patterns modelled after brain activity, the one – the mauve – representing a feeling of benign enlightenment, and the other – the red – representing the abject fear of being possessed by a demonic presence. In Frances Dyson's words, "With its finely crafted glass, interior fluorescence, and otherworldly plasmic pulsing, **I was scared to death/I could have died of joy** re-composes a more mystical vision: the beauty, simplicity and elegance of human consciousness unfettered by the paraphernalia of flesh, communicating the highest joys, the deepest fears, the full spectrum of emotional existence via

the perfect medium: a light emanating from within that both embodies and transmits unfathomable experience in a mathematically precise manner, communicating across a darkened space through a transparent medium to other 'like minds'."

Richards, currently living in Ottawa, where she is Associate Professor at the Department of Visual Arts at the University of Ottawa, considers new technologies as art material. Her work explores the spectator's role in these technologies, which she likens to "jam in the electro-magnetic sandwich."

The inaugural Biennale of Sydney was staged in 1973 as an international showcase for contemporary art. Its aim was to develop and present a program that challenged traditional thinking and encouraged new levels of enthusiasm for innovative creative expression. The Biennale of Sydney quickly achieved international recognition and from a small start, quadrupled in size in less than a decade. Today it ranks as one of the leading international festivals of contemporary art and multimedia.

It is an honour for the Liane and Danny Taran Gallery to act as Canadian Commissioner for this major international event, to take place from June 4 to August 15, 2004.

The Gallery gratefully acknowledges support for this event from the Canada Council for the Arts and Foreign Affairs Canada.

Questions? Isa Tousignant, 514-739-2301, 339

Liane and Danny Taran Gallery

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