

Scott McFarland

Filling Technician Preparing RA4 Colour Photographic Chemistry, 2001

chromogenic print
125.8 cm x 158.0 cm

Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund
VAG 2002.14



Scott McFarland

Filling Technician Preparing RA4 Colour Photographic Chemistry, 2001

Artist's Biography

Nationality: Canadian

Born: 1975, Ontario

Vancouver artist Scott McFarland graduated with a BFA from the University of British Columbia in 1997 and since that time his work has been exhibited locally, nationally and internationally. McFarland is part of a third generation of artists influenced by the documentary photographic practices instigated by the N.E. Thing Co. and taken up by Jeff Wall and Ian Wallace, recording Vancouver as a site and legitimizing the everyday city as a subject for art. McFarland's work is strongly influenced by the photo-conceptual practices of Wall, Wallace, Arni Haraldsson and Roy Arden. To date, his meticulously composed work has examined Vancouver and its surroundings as a contestable site of paradise lost. Through photo documentation of cultivated gardens and parks, holiday cabins (the modernized rustic), the artist inserts himself into the private realm and makes them public. The works reveal the maintenance of expansive upper class gardens, intimately capture visitors to suburban parkland (with a telephoto lens), and approach the weekend cabin from a voyeuristic point of view.

McFarland takes on the subject as a social phenomenon—an embodiment of the ideal, a demarcation of property, a barrier that encloses the domestic, a sign of privilege, an expenditure of resources, a source of employment, a point of technical production. Using a reified realism to negotiate the spaces of the public and the private, McFarland's work offers a renewed address of the urban landscape. The work under consideration depicts a technician in a dilapidated photo lab and reflects upon the changing role of the artist as producer. The highly composed photograph shows a grotty room full of dirty and makeshift equipment, tubes of chemicals running to vats, warning signage and the lab technician leaning over a vat of chemicals in a stained white coat, looking vaguely disinterested in his job. Ultimately, this is a photograph about photography. McFarland documents the shifting circumstances in the artistic process and in doing so points to a reliance on, and recognition of, technical production in the practice that he himself (and other artists) uses.

Artistic Context

Nationality: Canadian

Training: University of British Columbia

Peers: Evan Lee; Stephen Waddell; Jin-me Yoon

Group: photography; Photoconceptualism; 20th century; 21st century

Provenance: purchased from Monte Clarke Gallery; the artist

Subject: Vancouver; gardens; relationship between public and private; urban landscape

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Other Works in the Vancouver Art Gallery Collection

Scott McFarland
Trimming Late Summer, Sarwan Thind, 1999
chromogenic print
Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund with the financial support of the Canada Council for the Arts Acquisitions Assistance Program
VAG 2001.28.1

Scott McFarland
The Settler, 2001
chromogenic print
Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund with the financial support of the Canada Council for the Arts Acquisitions Assistance Program
VAG 2001.28.2

Scott McFarland
Barrel Brace, 2001
chromogenic print on paper
Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund
VAG 2004.37.166

Scott McFarland
Man with Aerator, 1999
chromogenic print on paper
Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund
VAG 2004.37.167

Scott McFarland
Cabin with Motion Detector Light, 2000
chromogenic print on paper
Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund
VAG 2004.37.168 a-b

Scott McFarland
View Study: Pinus Sylvestris, 1999
chromogenic print on paper
Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund
VAG 2004.37.169

Further Reading

Arden, Roy. *After Photography*. Vancouver: Monte Clarke Gallery, 1999.

Edge City. Surrey: Surrey Art Gallery, 1998.

Important Canadian Art. New York: ZieherSmith, 2004.

Scott McFarland. Vancouver: Vancouver Art Gallery, 2003.

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Exhibition History

Exhibitions at the Vancouver Art Gallery

The Shadow of Production: Work from the Collection. October 30, 2004 - January 16, 2005.

75 Years of Collecting: Portrait of a Citizen. September 23, 2006 - January 1, 2007.

Selected Exhibitions Outside of the Vancouver Art Gallery

Monte Clarke Gallery, Vancouver. *A Weird Science.* May 9, 2002 - June 4, 2002.

Archival History

Acquisitions Justification

Acquisition Record
2002

[transcription]

Scott McFarland
b. 1975, [Hamilton] ON
Lives in Vancouver

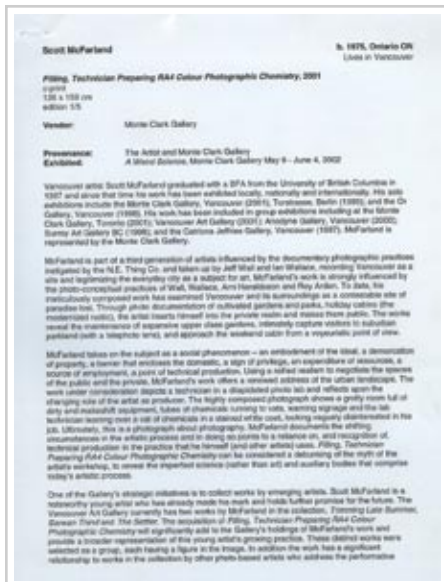
Filling, Technician Preparing RA4 Colour Photographic Chemistry, 2001

c-print
126 x 159 cm
edition 1/5

Vendor: Monte Clark Gallery

Provenance: The Artist and Monte Clark Gallery

Exhibited: *A Weird Science*, Monte Clark Gallery May 9 - June 4, 2002



Vancouver artist Scott McFarland graduated with a BFA from the University of British Columbia in 1997 and since that time his work has been exhibited locally, nationally and internationally. His solo exhibitions include the Monte Clark Gallery, Vancouver (2001); Torstrasse, Berlin (1999); and the Or Gallery, Vancouver (1998). His work has been included in group exhibitions including at the Monte Clark Gallery, Toronto (2001); Vancouver Art Gallery (2001); Anodyne Gallery, Vancouver (2000); Surrey Art Gallery BC (1998); and the Catriona Jeffries Gallery, Vancouver (1997). McFarland is represented by the Monte Clark Gallery.

McFarland is part of a third generation of artists influenced by the documentary photographic practices instigated by the N.E. Thing Co. and taken up by Jeff Wall and Ian Wallace, recording Vancouver as a site and legitimizing the everyday city as a subject for art. McFarland's work is strongly influenced by the photo-conceptual practices of Wall, Wallace, Arni Haraldsson and Roy Arden. To date, his meticulously composed work has examined Vancouver and its surroundings as a contestable site of paradise lost. Through photo documentation of

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cultivated gardens and parks, holiday cabins (the modernized rustic), the artist inserts himself into the private realm and makes them public. The works reveal the maintenance of expansive upper class gardens, intimately capture visitors to suburban parkland (with a telephoto lens), and approach the weekend cabin from a voyeuristic point of view.

McFarland takes on the subject as a social phenomenon—an embodiment of the ideal, a demarcation of property, a barrier that encloses the domestic, a sign of privilege, an expenditure of resources, a source of employment, a point of technical production. Using a reified realism to negotiate the spaces of the public and the private, McFarland's work offers a renewed address of the urban landscape. The work under consideration depicts a technician in a dilapidated photo lab and reflects upon the changing role of the artist as producer. The highly composed photograph shows a grotty room full of dirty and makeshift equipment, tubes of chemicals running to vats, warning signage and the lab technician leaning over a vat of chemicals in a stained white coat, looking vaguely disinterested in his job. Ultimately, this is a photograph about photography. McFarland documents the shifting circumstances in the artistic process and in doing so points to a reliance on, and recognition of, technical production in the practice that he himself (and other artists) uses. *Filling, Technician Preparing RA4 Colour Photographic Chemistry* can be considered a debunking of the myth of the artist's workshop, to reveal the imperfect science (rather than art) and auxiliary bodies that comprise today's artistic process.

One of the Gallery's strategic initiatives is to collect works by emerging artists. Scott McFarland is a noteworthy young artist who has already made his mark and holds further promise for the future. The Vancouver Art Gallery currently has two works by McFarland in the collection, *Trimming Late Summer*, *Sarwan Thind* and *The Settler*. The acquisition of *Filling, Technician Preparing RA4 Colour Photographic Chemistry* will significantly add to the Gallery's holdings of McFarland's work and provide a broader representation of this young artist's growing practice. These distinct works were selected as a group, each having a figure in the image. In addition the work has a significant relationship to works in the collection by other photo-based artists who address the performative presence of the human figure such as Jeff Wall and Jin-me Yoon.

Recommend purchase

Daina Augaitis
Chief Curator/Associate Director

Research: Melanie O'Brien
Curatorial Assistant

Scott McFarland

Filling Technician Preparing RA4 Colour Photographic Chemistry, 2001



Press Release

Miscellaneous History
2002-05-02

[transcription]

PRESS RELEASE

The Monte Clark Gallery is pleased to announce the exhibition "A Weird Science", a survey of recent photographic works by Evan Lee and Scott McFarland.

Evan Lee and Scott McFarland 08 May - 04 June, 2002

Within Evan Lee's and Scott McFarland's combined exhibition the process of photography and how the viewer observes it is closely examined. Both artists present a grouping of colour photographs derived from various sources that serve as an individual and collective look at how photography is perceived. Since photography's inception in the early part of the 19th century, artists and viewers alike have been intrigued by the role that this Weird Science plays and the innumerable questions it brings forth. The early aspect of photography's absolute objectivity is challenged within this exhibition. Evan Lee's photos of found produce boxes, spilled confetti and the derelict space left behind from a removed vanity are examples of his interest in "the relationship between the suspension of belief created by the initial visual experience of a picture and the rationalizing process that follows the comprehension of it". Scott McFarland's photographs of a neglected commercial photographic lab and a garden study at night present a strong and contemplative paradox. They examine the notion of the subject within photography and photography as a subject itself. Through the exhibition, A Weird Science, Evan Lee and Scott McFarland both bring forth the notion that the essence of photography may be questioned, but never denied.

Evan Lee was born in Vancouver in 1975 and graduated in 2000 with a MFA degree from University of British Columbia. Scott McFarland was born in Ontario in 1975 and graduated in 1997 with a BFA degree from University of British Columbia. Both artists live and work in Vancouver.

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Press Release
Miscellaneous History
2002-09-13

[transcription]

VANCOUVER ART GALLERY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, September 13, 2002

Vancouver Art Gallery acquires 27 new works of art

Vancouver, BC — As photographic work continues its rise within the international art world, the Vancouver Art Gallery announced that 27 works of art — predominately photo-based — have been acquired for the permanent collection this year. The majority of acquisitions are works by internationally renowned Canadian artists and demonstrate the Gallery's active role in collecting leading contemporary art and pertinent historical works.

The Gallery's Director, Kathleen Bartels, said: "In the past ten years Vancouver has developed an international reputation as a leading centre for contemporary visual arts. Attention has focused particularly on the "Vancouver School" of photoconceptualism that includes senior artists such as Roy Arden, Stan Douglas, Rodney Graham, Ken Lum, Jeff Wall and Ian Wallace. The Gallery's permanent collection is exceptionally strong in this area and recent acquisitions continue to build on this strength."

The Gallery collects work that is not only relevant to the region and will be significant to future generations, but that also participates in an international dialogue. Stan Douglas' *Every Building On 100 West Hastings*, 2001, is an important addition to the collection in this regard. "This work is a brilliant document of one of the most derelict and problematic streets in Vancouver's eastside", said Daina Augaitis, Chief Curator / Associate Director. "The artist has successfully distilled the image to evoke the site's rich cultural and economic history, while playfully referencing the legacy of conceptual art." *Every Building on 100 West Hastings* is currently on loan to the Contemporary Art Gallery and is the subject of a new publication. On view at the Contemporary Art Gallery (Nelson Street at Richards) from September 12 to November 3, 2002.

Notable amongst these acquisitions are 16 pieces produced between 1966 to 1977 by the **N.E. Thing Company**. From 1966-78 Iain and Ingrid Baxter collaborated as the N.E. Thing Company (NETCO) and presented conceptual ideas, purporting that the medium was the message. Their work represents a seminal moment of art production in Vancouver, which set the stage for this city's artistic reputation for outstanding photoconceptual work. NETCO's early photographic and light box works have a critical historical relationship to the development of current artistic practices in Vancouver.

Correspondingly, the acquisition of two 1887 collotypes (wet glass negatives) by **Eadweard Muybridge** help contextualize photoconceptual practices today. The plates are studies of movement and valuable examples of the early uses of photography. They add depth to the collection, both historically and as a vital step towards current artistic developments in photography.

The Gallery is also interested in collecting the work of local emerging artists and has acquired photographic work by **Karin Bubas** and **Scott McFarland**. Both are part of a dynamic group of young artists who have taken cues from Jeff Wall



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and Roy Arden and are being noticed by American and European galleries.

Bubas' photographic work documents public and private spaces with an anthropological eye. The Gallery has acquired a triptych from her project titled *Leon's Palace* that depicts the remnants of an abandoned crack hotel located in Vancouver's downtown eastside. Part of this work has been reproduced in Douglas Coupland's recently published book *Souvenir of Canada*.

Scott McFarland is from a third generation of artists influenced by documentary photographic practices. His work has examined Vancouver and its surroundings as a contestable site of paradise lost. McFarland's *Filling, Technician Preparing RA4 Colour Photographic Chemistry, 2001*, documents the artistic process: ultimately it is a photograph about photography.

The strength of contemporary art in western Canada was recently acknowledged when the Gallery, for the first time in its history, received the Canada Council's 2002 York Wilson Endowment Award. The award allowed the Gallery to purchase **Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun's** *Space, Place and Reason, 2001* for the permanent collection. This recent acquisition is on view at the Gallery as part of *This Place: works from the collection* until January 12, 2003.

The Gallery acquires work for the permanent collection through purchases, donations and bequests. An acquisitions fund was established through the sale of the Gallery's former site on West Georgia Street and gives the Gallery one of the largest acquisitions funds in Canada. More importantly, the generosity of private individuals and collectors greatly assists in building a valuable permanent collection.

- end -

Full list of recent acquisitions attached.

Media Contact:

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Download from the Vancouver Art Gallery's FTP site <ftp://ftp1-vag@vanartgallery.bc.ca>

Contact 604 662 4722 or media@vanartgallery.bc.ca for password access

The Vancouver Art Gallery gratefully acknowledges the support of the City of Vancouver, the Province of British Columbia through the BC Arts Council, the Government of Canada through the Canada Council for the Arts, the Department of Canadian Heritage Museum Assistance Program, the Greater Vancouver Regional District, the Vancouver Arts Stabilization Program (VAST) and the Gerald and Sheahan McGavin Capital Grants to the Arts.

Attachment

Acquisitions — January to September 2002

Purchased:

-**BC Binning**, *Untitled*, 1954

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- Karen Bubas**, *Kitchen 1, 2002, Kitchen 2, 2002 and Untitled (Life Poem), 2001*
- Stan Douglas**, *Every Building on 100 West Hastings, 2001*
- E.J. Hughes**, *Mount Cheam and the Fraser River, 1958*
- Scott McFarland**, *Filling, Technician Preparing RA4 Colour Photographic Chemistry, 2001*
- Eadweard Muybridge**, *Animal Locomotion Plate 46, 1887, Animal Locomotion Plate 84, 1887*
- N.E. Thing Company**, 16 works and ephemera
- Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun**, *Space, Place, Reason, 2001*

Donated:

- Denes Devenyi**, *The Artist Observed: Photographic Studies of BC Artists, 1961*
- Donald Jarvis**, *The Seasons (Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter) 1976, Beach Fire, 1994, Burning Stump, 1960, A Child's Christmas in Wales, 1957*
- Joan Miro**, *Le Ruban, 1981*
- Margaret Peterson**, *Untitled, 1940, A Christmas Card to Illustrate John Donne's Poem of Nativity, 1967*

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