Supermarket

Nadine Bariteau’s Supermarket is a wry comment on the supersizing of everyday consumer items to appease a bargain hunting public that seems to equate bigger with better. Trained as a printmaker, in recent years Bariteau has steered her work towards the use of expanded media as she stretches her print practice to include elements of installation, video and performance.

Aware of its satiric potential Bariteau effectively created her own brand of imaginary bottled water. She designed a larger-than-life bottle and then fabricated a series of vacuum-formed plastic water bottles each with their own hand-printed label reading Couronne or Crown. Packaged as oversized six-packs, each is designed to fit snugly into the back of a minivan to accommodate trouble-free transportation.

To push her parody even further, Bariteau had herself documented wheeling one of the large six-packs stacked on a standard sized shopping cart through a 24-hour grocery store parking lot. Maintaining a remarkably stoic demeanor, the artist is pictured loading her enormous purchase into the back of her minivan before presumably driving away. Bariteau’s deadpan delivery underlines the absurdity of her situation. One can easily picture the artist being accosted by curious shoppers asking if she is part of a promotional campaign or where they can purchase their own jumbo water bottles.

Bariteau recently expanded her performance into a 28-minute long video produced during a residency at NSCAD University in Halifax. Once again we witness the artist leaving the grocery store with her heroic six-pack packed atop a shopping cart. In this instance, she leaves the mall behind and pushes the shopping cart along suburban sidewalks, through busy intersections and industrial docklands. Struggling to push the cart along the maritime coastline Bariteau inevitably wheels the six-pack up a rocky expanse towards a picturesque ocean view, a determined shopper finally reaching the edge.

— Ivan Jurakic

Artist Biography

Nadine Bariteau completed her Masters of Fine Arts at York University and her Bachelor of Studio Arts at Concordia University. She has participated in solo and group exhibitions across Canada, the United States, Australia and Russia. Her works have recently been exhibited in a trio of virtual exhibitions: Waldon Art Gallery of Wisconsin; The Print Studio Gallery; Toronto; Art Gallery of Hamilton; and the International Print Center, New York. She has been the recipient of scholarships at Open Studio (Toronto) and Concordia University (Montréal). In 2011 she received the Canada Council for the Arts and the Ontario Arts Council Young Artist Award. She lives and works in Toronto.

List of Works

Supermarket, 2010
3 of 5 mounted photographs
76 x 101 cm

Crown, logo, 2010
Wood cut printing on Japanese paper
23 x 52 cm

Crown, 2011
High-definition video, 28 min

The artist wishes to acknowledge the support of the Canada Council for the Arts.
The banners and map form the conceptual spine of a multidisciplinary installation that sites within the typical household where the specimens were found and captured. It functions as an index featuring diagrammatic cutaways detailing the multiple Community, Abandoned House/Decay. This site is linked back to its point of origin on a corresponding map. As a rapt viewer, the banners invert the usual relationship between man and animal. Each banner is a grouping of these banners. Suspended above the boarded up residential properties and the failures of utopian modernist aspirations. In the site where the corresponding specimen had been discovered. The banners herald the secondary occupants/collected & observed, installation view Birchfield-Penney Art Center, Buffalo, 2010. (Cover)42 Interior Images (Top): Selections from Secondary Occupants/Collected & Observed, 2010–11. (Right) Volumes from an Imagined Intellectual History of Animals, Architecture, and Man. Featuring a broad selection of titles ranging from WPA murals into Modern Architecture to Intuition and Post-Context, this collection of disparate material seems to combust the researcher’s findings. However, these volumes are taken, closer scrutinies that mimic 20th century artifacts. Executing the iconic book jacket designs of Rudolph deHarak and other American modernists, such as has been patented and distasteful to resemble possible if unlikely by common domestic species that share this house and property including insects, birds and small mammals. Inspired, Montague began exploring the uncharted corners of his household. His investigations began in earnest with the killing of a spider. He assigned the specimen a site where the community had been discovered. The subculture of wildlife incursions into life after People, Montague’s project reminds us that life on this planet is not predetermined upon human survival.

If secondary occupants/collected & observed suggests an esoteric natural history display amassed by an eccentric naturalist obsessed with modern architecture it also proposes a blunt thesis: we pretend to be masters of the world at our peril. Without considering our actions within the context of the urban and natural environments that shelter and sustain us, it is ultimately our species that may be facing a crisis of extinction.

- FruD 2002
- Montague 2008–09
- Census block code 754, Avon elevation, down-slopes, 88.9 x 108 cm
- C-prints, Digital pigment ink prints, light-jet prints, t-pins
- Research Assemblage
- Specimen Vials 3, 48.3 x 111.8 cm each

“…we bought our house in the summer of 2005, at the time I was working on the Shopping Cart Project, and thinking about the collapse of the US financial system and the lack of hope for the future….” – Correspondence from the artist.

1. Although the process of portrait-making begins with a thorough investigation of a specimen, the portrait-making process may take on other forms, including the creation of an image using only the visual evidence of the specimen.
2. Montague’s work is informed by his belief that the collapse of modernism is a direct result of the failure of utopian modernist aspirations. In the wake of the global debt crisis and several recent catastrophic ecological investigations are remarkably germane, the poster: A Fukushima. These events situate the viewer in an ever-shrinking world on the brink of foreclosure, more so than we care to admit. Increasingly conscious of the depopulation of aging infrastructure and the potential for natural and manmade disasters, like an episode of the speculative cable series life after People, Montague’s project reminds us that life on this planet is not predetermined upon human survival.

- 108 x 88.9 cm
- Digital pigment ink print
- 42 Interior Images (Top): Selections from Secondary Occupants/Collected & Observed, 2010–11. (Right) Volumes from an Imagined Intellectual History of Animals, Architecture, and Man. Featuring a broad selection of titles ranging from WPA murals into Modern Architecture to Intuition and Post-Context, this collection of disparate material seems to combust the researcher’s findings. However, these volumes are taken, closer scrutinies that mimic 20th century artifacts. Executing the iconic book jacket designs of Rudolph deHarak and other American modernists, such as has been patented and distasteful to resemble possible if unlikely by common domestic species that share this house and property including insects, birds and small mammals. Inspired, Montague began exploring the uncharted corners of his household. His investigations began in earnest with the killing of a spider. He assigned the specimen a site where the community had been discovered. The subculture of wildlife incursions into life after People, Montague’s project reminds us that life on this planet is not predetermined upon human survival.

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