

Prima Materia

March 12 – April 23 2006, McMaster Museum of Art
Diane Baker, Elaine Whittaker, Lynda Gammon

Everyday Alchemy

by Nikki Cormier and Sally Frater

...Lynda Gammon's practice centres on her interest in the concepts of space - remembered places, evocative spaces, and the relationship between images of spaces and the experience of actual environments. By juxtaposing "represented spaces", in black and white photographs, with the "presented" spaces of assemblages of recycled, utilitarian materials, Gammon addresses the confluence of "the physical and the psychical." Her installations are at once sculptural and architectural, transforming the space around them. Constructed from assorted everyday items, materials salvaged from construction sites, household objects, and photographs, the specifics of the structures don't add up. The newly created spaces are difficult for us to situate; they don't seem to quite make sense, and they are all the more unsettling because of their vague familiarity.

Collapsible Double Wall and Incomplete Renovation show parallels with Kurt Schwitter's Merzbau. The first Merzbau began as Schwitter's Hanover studio; between 1919 and 1937 (when the building was destroyed by Allied bombing), the artist continually worked on the space adding found objects and sculpture to the architecture, removing elements, creating a cohesive environment between objects and structure until he had created "vast three dimensional collages."

Like the Merzbau, Gammon's materials retain identity from their original situations. They reference work, domestic and industrial, thus they lend themselves to the visibility of Gammon's methods of construction: "the process of gluing, taping, layering, building, enlarging, editing and re-editing, modifying and relativising." At the same time as they evidence the fabrication of these particular structures, the materials also reference process and transformation in a larger way. Art historian Jo Anna Isaak has commented that recycled elements in artworks "bring us right back to confront what we had go[ten] rid of, giving new meaning to the notion of the eternal in art." Here Gammon addresses the notion of the eternal by means of the perpetual – the works represent an ongoing



SALVAGED 4 120" W X 28" D X 24" H

