

GLOBE AND MAIL

**Lynda Gammon, and Sonya Hanney
+ Adam Dade at Gallery 44**

Until Feb. 3,
401 Richmond St. West, Suite 120, Toronto; 416-979-3941

This exciting exhibition, *Rearrangements: Sculpture/Performance/Photography*, brings together very smart work by Victoria-based artist Lynda Gammon and by the art duo Sonya Hanney and Adam Dade, who live and work in Bristol, England.

Gammon's work -- which appears at first to consist of a chaotic black-and-white jumble of imprecisely arranged slices of gleaming foam core, shards of photography and a few bits of architectural modelling (punctuated with bits of doll-house furniture) -- soon settles out into clearly improvised but deftly controlled assemblages that lie somewhere between built and derelict environments. Persuasively architectural (so enterable and enclosure-like are these ad hoc forms) and yet so vulnerable and abject, Gammon's structures, built as a performance and photographed before their disassembly, exist mostly as memory, as hypothesis, as a ghostly echo of the building act itself.

The work of Hanney and Dade takes place on the sly, in hotel rooms they have reserved and inhabited for one night -- a night in which they systematically and clandestinely gather together every movable thing in the room and compact it all into one humongous stack. After photographing their new densely compressed digs, they take the stack apart again and put everything back where it was.

Gary Michael Dault

ARTPOST

WALKING THE LINE # 40: SALVAGED

("Wherein a fragile assemblage is barnacled to the wall")

I wrote briefly a few days ago (in *The Globe & Mail*) about Lynda Gammon's hectic and morphologically exciting contributions to an exhibition currently at Toronto's Gallery 44 called *Rearrangements: Sculpture / Performance / Photography* (the show is a dual exhibition, curated by Katy McCormick, of work by Gammon and British art-duo, Sonya Hanney and Adam Dade)—but there is more, I think, to say.

Gammon's work exists in the intervals and interstices that open between architecture, sculpture, performance, assemblage, photography and collage. There are two examples of her work in the Gallery 44 show (a detail of one of them is illustrated here).

If you give them only a cursory glance—which is difficult to do, because of the degree to which they are conjunctive and visually incorporating ("incorporating" in the more or less literal sense of folding the body into their enterable complexities)—you are likely to find yourself deeply, haptically, viscerally engaged in the architectural-sculptural-constructivist push-pull of the pieces. As simultaneously remote and yet, as hyper-present as architectural models (a reading underscored by Gammon's plentiful use of black-and-white photos of architectural details, and wayward bits of white dollhouse furniture), her large, apparently ad hoc, wall-mounted constructions hover between states, resting momentarily and energetically, as curator McCormick notes in her essay accompanying the exhibition, "between object and process." Gammon

herself—who teaches at the University of Victoria in B.C.—suggests, in a recent statement (2006) about the two works in the Gallery 44 exhibition, that they are:

“...part of an ongoing series of sculptural assemblages called Salvaged. Interweaving both new and recycled photographs from my ever-growing archive of interior spaces with construction site detritus, I construct wall mounted architectural models. Photographs are glued next to one another, layered one on another, folded, refolded, taped and glued together. Combined with retrieved construction site and household refuse, teetering on the edge between representation and abstraction, a fragile assemblage is barnacled to the wall. Existing only for the duration of the exhibition this fragile assemblage is broken apart in the process of removal, its parts returning to the archive as material for future works within the Salvaged series.”

Gammon’s pieces seem, initially, to be in such morphological disarray, so broken, dog-eared and abject, that they evoke ruin as insistently and as authoritatively as they bespeak construction or building. They look casually and indeed cavalierly tossed together, as if Gammon has heaved them quickly into place and fixed them there with a glue-gun and gaffer tape—though I expect they are, in fact, a little more deliberate than that.

But not much more. Less rigorously planned, no doubt, than full-scale projects by the architects everyone called Deconstructivists in the late 1980, and whose work Gammon appears to echo and reference, albeit with a simultaneous humour and ruefulness (Eisenman, Gehry, Tschumi, Libeskind, Coop HimmelBlau, Zaha Hadid, Lebbeus Wood and the like)—a lack of rigor traceable both to the model-like scale at which Gammon works, in tandem with her desire to keep the work improvisationally exploratory—Gammon’s structures both beckon and repel, offering the viewer the excitement of continual destabilization, in that, when you approach them, you never know precisely where to stand or what point(s) of view is (are) available to you.

The works are tantalizing—as seductive and personally claimable as they are remote and chimera-like (the idea of architecture, the idea of photography, the idea of space, the idea of shelter, the idea of inhabitation, the idea of an exo-skeletal language of Surround). “These dollhouse spaces,” writes curator Katy McCormick in her Gammon catalogue essay for Gallery 44, “oscillate between what we know to be scraps of wood, Styrofoam, cardboard, and a world of imagined architecture and forgotten forays.” McCormick quotes Gammon to the effect that “At some point in time in the process a coherent assemblage seems to coalesce and stabilize for a period. This is its finished state, its life. At this point I would document it as such and dismantle it. The pieces return to the archive box and the process begins anew.”

ADDENDUM.

Gammon’s helter-skelter structures—that eventually fall so poignantly into place as temporary resolution (at which epiphanic point [how one longs to further investigate the precise nature of this structurally au pointe moment!] they are photographed and filed—exist at some sort of hinge-place between morphological deconstruction (out of Derrida) and a more recent adhesion to “Folding in Architecture” (out of Gilles Deleuze). As Deleuze popularizer Bernard Cache notes in his stimulating book *Earth Moves: The Furnishing of Territories* (MIT Press, 1995), a reformulated rationalist architecture (thinking of deconstructivism as super-rationalist) would be an architecture [a “folded” architecture] that would “introduce intervals in a territory in order to construct frames of probability” (p.23). For life, as Cache (who is a furniture designer) points out, “naturally transpires in the intervals of matter.” And it is within these intervals that Lynda Gammon seems mostly to work.

Works by Lynda Gammon continue in exhibition at Toronto's Gallery 44, 401 Richmond Street West, Suite 120, until February 3. 416-979-3941. www.gallery44.org.

Gary Michael Dault