

CONTEMPORARY ART GALLERY

555 Hamilton St., Vancouver, BC

17 Aug 89 until 9 Sep 89

Lynda Gammon

The mixture of materials and images from a wide range of styles and periods can be taken for granted as one of the defining characteristics of postmodern artistic practice. As an overall project, this research represents an attempt to develop an epistemology derived from the information that emerges out of these new combinations of materials and forms.

Lynda Gammon's work from the last five years constitutes a sustained research into the relations between sculpture and the idea of the domestic, between the idea of sculpture and domestic objects. The method here is that of collage, but collage that easily combines elements from pop-art and arte povera practice into a kind of "installation" work that raises questions about the relations between the gallery and the home. Also, by referring to Tatlin and Gabo, these works invoke the idealism of Constructivist art and apply that ideal to objects traditionally used by women in the home.

The work you see in the gallery results from a gestation process involving preparatory drawings, working models, and "earlier" versions of these pieces. As these works take form they proceed from their status as single isolated elements to the complexes that you see here — but paradoxically, they seem to achieve more stability as objects in the world as they become more complex — like molecules of domesticity, they appear to have arrived at a condition toward which they had been striving, and in which they are more comfortable than they had been when "alone." This resulting fragmentation serves as a structural analogue for the make-up of our houses analyzed from the point of view of the functional aspect of the objects we live with. The integration, for instance, of a chair and the light falling on that chair, is here represented by a physical integration of the chair and the lamp (see *Aromaster*). Her *Cool Touch* depicts in gestural/psychological terms the knot-like feeling of being harassed by your own telephone. The other side of the "knot," the unwinding, the picture of relief in a relief, appears in many of these works, not only as relief but as an index of disintegration (the spiral leading to infinity and an entropic zero).

Gammon describes these pieces as being patched or puzzled together. The taxonomy she has created queries, at the philosophical level, the relation of meaning between (the idea of) appliances and the other objects that inhabit our personal lives. She asks through this repositioning whether a 19th century table leg remembers itself as an appliance, and whether bits of throw-away styrofoam packing can be seen as extensions of the world of objects that "work for us." It is this position as "potentially useful" domestic objects that gives this work its double-life, its architectonic unity, its meaning, and its humour. As a metaphor for art itself, her idea that she is trying to catch a "momentary kind of wholeness" in these works, seems to summarize much of 1980s artistic practice, while maintaining a strong connection with the history of picture making.

-Bill Jeffries