

Contemporary Art Gallery

Vancouver, BC

Harrell Fletcher

September 11, 2017 to June 15, 2018
Burrard Marina Field House Studio Residency

Andrew Dadson

October 13 to December 31, 2017
B. C. Binning and Alvin Balkind Galleries

Lyse Lemieux

October 13, 2017 to March 25, 2018
Gallery façade and off-site at
Yaletown-Roundhouse Station

Lyse Lemieux

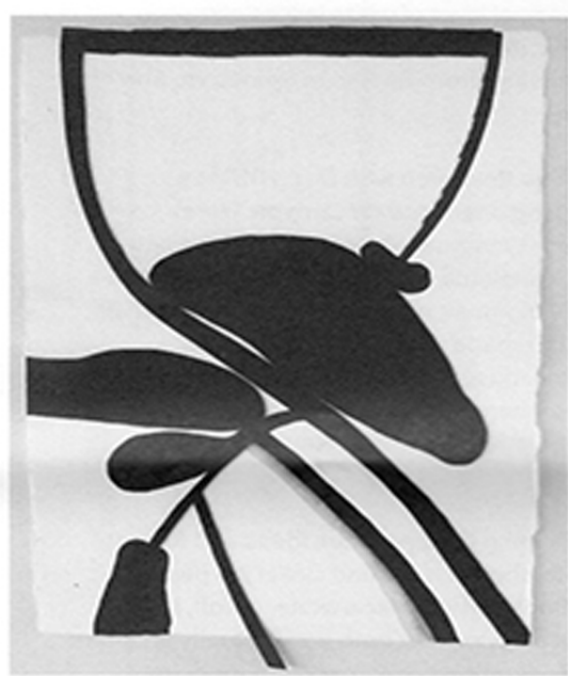
FULL FRONTAL

October 13, 2017 to March 25, 2018
Gallery façade and off-site at
Yaletown-Roundhouse Station

The Contemporary Art Gallery presents a major solo exhibition of work by Canadian artist Lyse Lemieux, incorporating two new inter-related large-scale commissions across the gallery façade and off-site, both challenging and exploiting the opportunities presented at each location.

Lemieux's artistic practice is often described as one focused on drawing, balanced between figuration and abstraction. But there is something about the artist's material handling of line and form that is a key characteristic to understanding her process and thinking. Lemieux draws the way a fisherman pulls in the nets — "I need to hold the line in my hands" — stretching, cutting, assembling, turning it over and over, feeling its nap, testing its weight. She absorbs its economy, its tensile possibilities. We might consider this as Lemieux's way of learning about the potential of line, often speaking of three-dimensional drawing, and why she "draws" as much with black felt and dressmaker's shears, with button plackets and medical tape, as with ink.

Whether working in small (and until very recently, private) notebooks, on sheets of paper, or across the "page" of the gallery façade and the glass panelled architecture of the Yaletown-Roundhouse Station, Lemieux's working process is inseparable from the forms she creates, which are almost always in reference to the human figure. At CAG, the sequence of large-scale black ellipses on a fleshy-beige background, alternating with areas of pattern, quite literally cover and contain the building, redolent of familiar forms, both revealing and concealing.



Above:

Lyse Lemieux
Dessin Feutré 4 (2015)
Courtesy the artist

Right:

Lyse Lemieux
Sans Titre; Tête Noire (2009)
Courtesy the artist
Photograph by SITE Photography

Opposite:

Lyse Lemieux
FULL FRONTAL (2017)
Courtesy the artist



Lyse Lemieux
Ovals for Richmond (2016)
Installation view, Richmond Art Gallery, 2016
Photograph by Dennis Ha
Courtesy the artist

But while part of the artist's composition across the façade might suggest something figural, it equally refers to the body by proxy: through the garments that clothe it, the patterned sections recalling fabric drapes, the design itself wrapping the building. Lemieux is haunted by certain forms — like the black tunic she wore throughout Catholic school as a girl, or the pleated skirt — motifs that reappear again and again throughout her work. Deeply aware of the significance of clothing, the way it declares or masks our subject positions, constrains and liberates us, the artist thinks like a patternmaker: she sees the body through the cut of a skirt, the slope of a shoulder seam. While the works at CAG appear to hem in the building, obstinately suggestive of what and how something is enclosed, by contrast, at Yaletown-Roundhouse Station, the intervention unfolds in moments when the artwork appears pulled back, offering glimpses of what lies behind or underneath.

And then there is the artist's humour: sometimes rueful, sometimes coy. In works presented in a gallery, it can appear through irreverence to the sanctity of the frame (a tongue of cut felted wool or a found skirt will often dangle below it) or to the singularity of the page (a composition is very often held between two sheets of paper seamed together). Lemieux's wit expresses a resilience, too, to the frustrations of working as a woman artist (much of the time invisibly) for many years, which while refraining from any overt political agenda, might be cast within a context illuminating women's issues. Certainly this new commission's title, *FULL FRONTAL*, which joins together the two works, has wryness in its use of language, its evocation of a particular imagery as well as its declaration of a state of being, a description of the works' enveloping and reclaiming of the space of the architecture which provides its support. Simultaneously subtle or nuanced, yet literally in your face, it is here we sense the smart solution to the presentation of the private in the public realm, Lemieux's stance asserting the individual and the gendered within the bland, homogenous surroundings of this part of the city.

To accompany the exhibition, Lyse Lemieux has developed a new limited edition exclusively for CAG. While each shares the same archival printed background, the artist has incorporated hand-made felt additions, making each work unique. The edition numbers 15 and is available to purchase for \$200. Please see our website or gallery shop for further details.

At the Yaletown-Roundhouse Station, work is presented by CAG in partnership with the Canada Line Public Art Program — InTransit BC. Lemieux is grateful for the support of Canada Council for the Arts and BC Arts Council. *FULL FRONTAL* is also supported by Proper Design.

Lyse Lemieux studied at the University of Ottawa (1973–1975) and the University of British Columbia (1976–1978), receiving a BFA from the University of British Columbia (1978). Recent solo exhibitions include *A Girls Gotta Do What A Girls Gotta Do*, Richmond Art Gallery (2016); *Black Is The Size Of My New Skirt*, Republic Gallery, Vancouver; *In-Between-In-Between*: Lyse Lemieux & Meryl McMaster, Katzman Contemporary, Toronto (2015); *Soldiers and Vesperers*, Chernoff Fine Arts, Vancouver (2009); *Skinslips/Peau de Japon*, Musée Marsil, St. Lambert, Québec (2006); *Mignonnette Tempore de Nainville*, Sylviane Poirier Art Contemporain, Montréal (2004); *À Fleur De Peau/Second Skin*, Charles H. Scott Gallery, Vancouver (1989); *Michèle Delisle/Lyse Lemieux*, La Commune di Perugia, Italy (1987). Alongside her exhibitions, collaborative work by Lemieux has also resulted in two new works by choreographer/dancer Ziyun Kwan, *Dumb Instrument Dance* at Richmond Art Gallery (2016); and *À Fleur De Peau: The Skin Project* with Marguerite Witvoet and Barbara Bourget for Vancouver International Dance Festival (2005). Participation in recent group exhibitions includes *Vancouver Special: Ambivalent Pleasures*, Vancouver Art Gallery (2016–2017); *Aujourd'hui Encore*, Trépanier Baer Gallery, Calgary (2016); *Out of Line*, Oakville Galleries, Ontario (2015); *Cut & Paste*, Equinox Gallery, Vancouver (2012). In 2017 Lemieux was the recipient of the Doris and Jack Shadbolt Foundation for the Visual Arts VIVA award for Outstanding Achievement in the Visual Arts. She lives and works in Vancouver.