Barbara Meneley: Keeping The Tower and Prairie History Redux
EXHIBITIONS | CENTRAL MEDIATHEQUE

Barbara Meneley: Keeping the Tower
Curated by Jennifer Matotek, Director/Curator

September 5 to November 14, 2015

IN SITU
Barbara Meneley: Prairie History Redux
Curated by Blair Fornwald, Assistant Curator

October 17, 2015 to January 16, 2016
Prairie History Room, Central Library
Drawing Performances: Saturdays, October 17, November 7, and December 5, 1:00 pm

A Conversation with Barbara Meneley
by Jennifer Matotek

How did you develop the concept for the performance and video piece, Keeping the Tower?

It was my first semester doing my PhD. I was sitting in a classroom at Queen’s University, in a building with thick stone walls. We were talking about cultural theory and I started thinking: “Oh no, what have I done? I’m here in this place!” The thick walls started feeling really confining and I couldn’t stand it. So I started to think about a piece that would respond to that. I filmed myself building the wall of books in the doorway of the classroom that I was in.

What can people expect if they engage with you and your project, Prairie History Redux?
They can expect to get a sense of how the Prairie History Room reflects where we are, in terms of the information that is in there. They have a 250 year old Hudson Bay’s catalogue, high school yearbooks from the beginning of the collection and a 2015 report on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. I’ve used the Prairie History Room since I came to Regina in 2006. I’m interested in the people who go in there for their research. The Prairie History Room expresses a lot about where we are.

*Prairie History Redux* will involve the act of tracing. Could you please talk a little bit about the act of tracing, what you think about it and in the context of your practice?

I feel like when you trace something, say that it’s a map that’s 30 years old that would have been done by hand… it’s like following footsteps… I feel like we’re embodying the hand of the original maker because there are ways that the line will shift, or be narrow, or cut off at the end. In order to trace, you have to somehow approximate the original movement, but every time it’s inevitably a translation. By tracing, I’m embodying information – information that is embodied in the lives of everybody who is here, and the histories of everybody who is here, and who have been here, and who will be here. It all connects.

**Artist Biography**

Barbara Meneley is a Canadian visual artist whose interdisciplinary, site responsive work engages with the landscapes and foundations of contemporary society and culture. Her work evolves through theoretical inquiry and contemporary intermedia art - installation, media, performance and engaged practice.
CREDITS


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