

Southlands credited to Scott Massey

Labyrinth:
Surrey Condos Edition
Featuring Vinyl Village Upgrade
and Surrey Condos Edition

Sandee Moore

August 8 -
September 16

The Vault

aravica
artist-run centre

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September 16

Main Gallery

Lyndl Hall

Circle, Sphere, Horizon Line



Rarely do we think about just how far a townhouse subdivision is from embodied experience. Suburban order is established in the extreme with grids of identical houses facing not the landscape but their mirror opposites across the street. Physically mapped out for efficiency and restriction of expression—often reinforced through behavioural regulations against unsightly front yards, unsettling paint jobs, or lifestyle seepage—the modern subdivision emphasizes bland homogeneity and middle-class values. Sameness does not facilitate interconnectedness and community, but rather a serial separation, individual expression truncated into anonymity.

Using a tongue-in-cheek rationale that both video games and suburban environments are difficult or unappealing to some people, Sandee Moore's *Labyrinth* could more aptly be considered an un-game where progress through levels takes the participant to evermore desolate surroundings until one finds oneself in a construction zone of exposed shells of houses, insulation, and dirt. With a sense of goal-oriented accomplishment thwarted, one is left

Southlands, Sandee Moore.
Photo courtesy of Surrey Art Gallery.



Labyrinth: Surrey Condos Edition, Sandee Moore.
Photo courtesy of artist.

with the choice of a subtler, more existential attitude towards the activity. Moore asks the gallery participant to employ their feet to operate the system in her installation with, seemingly, a lack of reward for effort. In order to traverse space, one follows the direction of arrows on a pressure pad forward, backward, left or right—actions that reinforce the overly formal nature of the environment. This regimentation makes the incongruous elements, and the narratives they suggest, all the more exciting, particularly because discovered by happenstance they are intermittent and whimsical interlopers to an otherwise uneventful environment. Whereas most virtual reality games intend to create a seamless, novel and enticing experience, wherein a person brackets their bodily needs for the duration, Moore teases the realities apart, emphasizing instead a contentious relationship between an 'otherworld', its physical navigation, and our psychological enchantment.

Along with Moore, Lyndl Hall is interested in how technologies orchestrate our navigation of the world and the degree to which direct physical/psychological knowledge of a place is eroded by instrumentation. For Hall the white cube of the gallery becomes a theatrical non-place (in the anthropological sense) where an array of artifacts of global travel occupy a nondescript space similar to that of wayfinding ideograms in airports or a taxonomist's board of specimens—neutral, semantic, serially presenting reality as codified information.

In an episode of the television series “The West Wing”, on Big Block of Cheese Day (season 2, episode 16, 2000), the Organization of Cartographers for Social Equality (OCSE) present a convincing case against the contemporary use of the Mercator projection map in schools. The map was developed by the Flemish cartographer Gerardus Mercator in the 1500's to facilitate nautical movement across the globe through lines of constant bearing (a grid) that ignored the relative size of continents. A universal top/bottom, west/east standard for accepting the layout of continents and their people is an analogue that has shaped our understanding of international relationships according to colonization practices as well - Australians are ‘down under’, Africa is disproportionately tiny. This map is not a natural fit for the slightly lumpy sphere of our planet where north, south, west and east are constructs convenient for those who benefit from their connotations. Lyndl Hall's examination of historical methods of navigation through the arrow of the compass and our understanding of the world as a sphere, carry

Arrow, Lyndl Hall. Photo courtesy of artist.



Sphere I & II, Lyndl Hall. Photo courtesy of artist.

expectations abstracted from the contingency of embodied experience, providing analogues for what we should do, and the direction we ought to go to ‘discover’ a route. However, the fact that within the gallery the arrow (at nine feet in length) was cast in sand and maintains a rough finish as it lies on the floor pointing due north, or, that the globes smoothly fashioned out of plaster, are featureless and cannot spin, emphasize a more evocative materiality to these objects despite their historical cultural usage. Found documentary footage from an Antarctic expedition and the inclusion of a fresco of St. Christopher forefront beliefs that underpin our perceptions about travel. The filmic segments of the installation, two silent looping videos, *Boat* and *Albatross*, both struggle for equilibrium, one of the horizon from a pitching ship's deck and the other a luckless attempt to contain a bird in flight within the camera's frame. The patron saint of travelers rendered in an out-of-date medium reveals the other objects in Hall's exhibition as a display of desperate attempts to control the contingency of being in the world. How she creates and presents these objects introduces doubt.



According to communications scholar Derrick de Kerckhove, the alphabet originally developed by the Greeks in 400BCE remains the core technology through which we process information. In the urban landscape there is a direct relationship between literacy and city grids, changing the embodied experience of space as “an extension of the skin and an experience of the breathing lungs... [to] an objective reality, subject to visual appreciation, analysis, theory, classification and management.”¹ A literate populace experiences the world frontally and a literate society with a low-context language (such as English) does not embrace ambiguity. Both Hall and Moore introduce a strong duality (and ambiguity) to ordinary modes of navigation we believe we understand on sight. They are critical of expectations, as most contemporary artists are, and aim to expose the extraordinary in the mundane, which is also an aspect of contemporary practice, but they do not stop there. We know the world flatly in terms of its use to us (its use value) whether that be the practical aspects of getting from point A to point B, or of a game promising entertainment. Immanuel Kant had a phrase that described the aesthetic judgment linked to imaginative engagement and interpretation in the world: ‘purposiveness without purpose’ (Zweckmäßigkeit ohne Zweck). Artworks, as aesthetic pursuits, muddle the sense of purpose even though it may be indicated in the material, method or connotations of the resultant work. Aesthetic ideas and their material traces in objects or environments add to our interpretation of experience “by suggesting significant affinities even when direct conceptual connections are lacking.”² Ideally, this is what art does, and this is what Moore and Hall do here.



Votive, Lyndl Hall.
Photo courtesy of artist.

Terryl Atkins is a Senior Lecturer in Visual and Performing Arts, Thompson Rivers University. She teaches drawing, visual culture, curatorial, and art theory, writes on contemporary art practice, and maintains her own photo and video art practice.

Lyndl Hall received a BFA from Concordia University, Montreal, in 2006 and graduated with a MAA in Visual Arts from Emily Carr University, Vancouver, in 2010. She has exhibited at the Western Front, CSA Space, and Access Arts Run Centre in Vancouver, as well as at the Burnaby Art Gallery and Sanatorium Project Space, Istanbul. She was artist in residence at DRAW International in Caylus, France in 2012 and her work has been published in *The Capilano Review*, *West Coast Line*, and by *Publication Studio Vancouver*. She has recently had solo exhibitions at the *The Reach Gallery Museum*, Abbotsford, and the *Burrard Arts Foundation*, Vancouver.



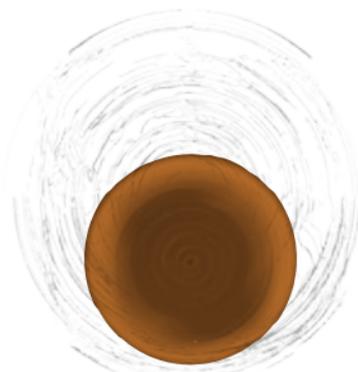
Vinyl Village Upgrade, Surrey Condos Edition,
Sandee Moore. Photo courtesy of artist.

Sandee Moore proposes to animate social relationships through personal exchange via artwork in media such as performance, video, installation, and interactive electronic sculpture. Moore has screened and exhibited across Canada (including The Surrey Art Gallery, The Art Gallery of Alberta, Plug In ICA, The Winnipeg Art Gallery, The Dalhousie Art Gallery, The Blackwood Gallery, The Dunlop Art Gallery and The Surrey Art Gallery) and in Japan. She earned her BFA (Honours) from The University of Victoria and MFA in Intermedia from The University of Regina. Following her education, Moore served as the Director of Video Pool Media Arts Centre (Winnipeg) and was an instructor at The School of Art at the University of Manitoba, before moving to Surrey, BC. Moore currently makes her home in Regina, SK.

- Terryl Atkins
Kamloops, August 6, 2017

¹ de Kerckhove, Derrick. *The Architecture of Intelligence*, Basel: Birkhäuser. 2001, p.8.

² Makkreel, Rudolf A. *Imagination and Interpretation in Kant: The Hermeneutical Import of the Critique of Judgement* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 1990, p.5.



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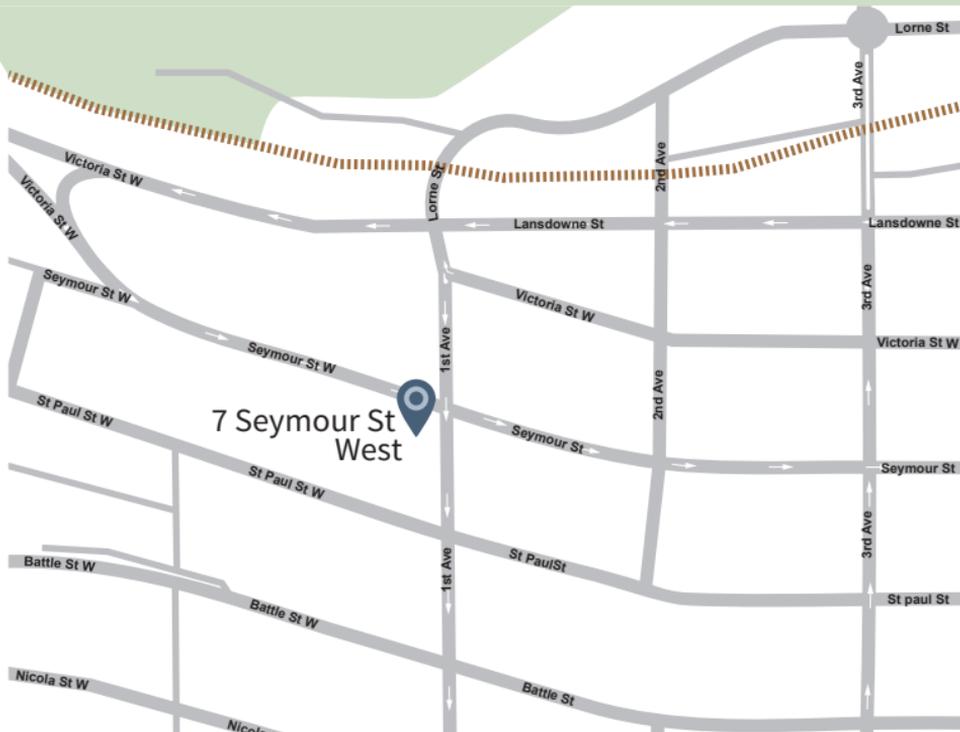


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