



Contemporary Art Gallery

Vancouver, BC

# Sarah Browne

July 13 to September 2, 2012

B. C. Binning and Alvin Balkind Galleries

Opening reception: Thursday July 12, 7-10pm

# Nicolas Sassoon

July 13, 2012 to January 20, 2013

Off-site

Opening reception: Thursday July 12, 7-10pm

Josephine Meckseper

Continues until September 2, 2012

Window Spaces



## Sarah Browne

*How to Use Fool's Gold*

July 13 to September 2, 2012

B. C. Binning and Alvin Balkind Galleries

The Contemporary Art Gallery presents the first North American exhibition by Dublin-based artist Sarah Browne, a survey including the artist's entry for the 2009 Venice Biennale. Using 'the economy' as the basis for her artistic practice, Browne works with small communities of people, documenting resourceful forms of exchange to reveal the hidden social relations that exist in small-scale economic structures, summations of collective intention or desire typically influenced by emotional affects. Within the current context of austerity measures and failing markets, such an undertaking could not be more relevant. By processes such as filmmaking, sculpture and publishing the potential for a more radical resourcefulness is sought as a manifestation of creative opposition to prevailing systems. Vancouver with its immediate history of Vietnam draft dodgers and alternative island lifestyles provides an interesting backdrop for Browne's work.

On February 17, 2012, in the midst of an unfolding European currency crisis, the Central Bank of France ceased to exchange French francs for euros, ending a system that has continued since the introduction of the euro and thus marking the demise of the franc altogether. Commissioned by the Contemporary Art Gallery and its partners, Browne's film *Second Burial at Le Blanc* (2011–2012) follows a procession through Le Blanc, a small French town where local merchants continued to accept francs for goods and services. At the centre of this procession is Browne's bespoke 'ticker-tape countdown clock', counting down the hours, minutes and seconds of the franc's existence, the film completed in the days immediately following the end to the original currency.



Sarah Browne was born in 1981. Her practice includes exhibitions, public projects, publishing and critical writing, and she also works collaboratively with Gareth Kennedy as Kennedy Browne. Browne has participated in residencies and artist exchanges in Finland, Thailand, Japan and the UK and is currently resident at Firestation Artist Studios, Dublin. Recent exhibitions include *Second Burial at Le Blanc*, Project Arts Centre, Dublin; *To Have/ To Own*, Kunsti Art Museum, Vaasa, Finland; *Lebensreform in Leitrim*, Leitrim Sculpture Centre, Ireland (all 2011); *Minimalism and Applied II*, Daimler Contemporary, Berlin; Golden Thread Gallery, Belfast and *Unto This Last*, Raven Row, London (all 2010). In 2009 she co-represented Ireland at the 53<sup>rd</sup> Venice Biennale. Forthcoming exhibitions include Higher Lanes Gallery, Drogheda and Galway Arts Centre, Ireland (2012).

The film commission *Second Burial at Le Blanc* and the exhibition catalogue are co-produced by the Contemporary Art Gallery with Project Arts Centre, Dublin, Ireland and Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, UK.

The exhibition is generously supported by Culture Ireland and The Arts Council / An Chomhairle Ealaíon.

A full colour publication accompanies the exhibition, priced \$38, special exhibition price \$30. It includes commissioned essays by Tessa Giblin, Curator of Visual Arts, Project Arts Centre, Dublin and artist Jeremy Millar, plus texts by graphic designer Chris Lee and anthropologist Marshall Sahlins.

Left

**Sarah Browne**

*How to Use Fool's Gold (Pyrite Radio) (2012)*  
(detail)

Pyrite, Plexiglas, safety pin, paperclip, bulldog clips, variable capacitor, plastic drainpipe, electrical wire, bakelite headphones (passive crystal radio set, earthed to the building's lightning rod with aerial extending outside)  
Courtesy of the artist

Above

**Sarah Browne**

*Second Burial at Le Blanc (2011–2012)*

Still from 16mm colour film, sound  
Courtesy of the artist



As the film unfolds, the commemorative nature of the event seems ever more poignant, a sort of anti-monument in progress to what Le Blanc represented as a working alternative to the current state of affairs across Europe and the world. Accompanying this are two newspapers, distributed free in the town and previous presentations, visual essays that weave together historical and anthropological information related to the work.

Several of Browne's works explore redundant technologies and leftover industries. Her *Carpet for the Irish Pavilion at the Venice Biennale (2009)* is made from surplus wool stocks from the Donegal Carpets factory. Once renowned for its hand-knotted carpets adorning Irish embassies around the globe, Donegal now produces carpets by machine or outsourced labour. The artist's carpet was hand-knotted by two of the factory's previous female employees and the design, reminiscent of Irish modernist Eileen Gray, was dictated by the proportions of surplus wool remaining at the old factory, now converted into a 'heritage centre'. Works such as this positions Browne's approach as rooted in documentary, operating from a principle of 'critical proximity' and using certain methods from the social sciences, particularly ethnography.

*A Model Society (2007)* stems from research in which Iceland was declared the happiest nation on earth. Browne advertised for knitwear models in Reykjavik newspapers and then surveyed respondents about the quality of life in Iceland. The models are presented within iconic Icelandic landscapes, wearing traditional Lopi sweaters in which selected phrases from their comments, such as 'no war' and 'rotten politics', have been knitted. In works like these, the artist taps into the personal, emotional underpinnings of both national identity and macroeconomic forces, the traditions of such knitting practice shared globally with other indigenous coastal communities, seen here on the west coast in Cowichan sweaters.

## Nicolas Sassoon

### WAVES

Yaletown-Roundhouse Station,  
Canada Line  
July 13, 2012 to January 20, 2013

Nicolas Sassoon's new commission WAVES is part of his ongoing body of work using Moiré patterns — a visual blur inadvertently discovered by Swiss photographer Ernst Moiré — whereby two images are overlaid to create a third 'plane'. The resulting optical effect causes the eye to see movement where there is none.

The artist's concern with visually vibrating patterns stems from his interest in the various factors relating to a computer screen, a matrix display with inherent limitations of depth, detail and colour. Sassoon uses such considerations — restrained palette and individual pixels — as the parameters to make a series of hypnotic animations specifically designed to be seen on such displays. Avoidance of smooth gradients instead leans toward the hard-edged, grids and lines creating complex configurations that test the screen itself in its technological ability to process and render such information accurately.

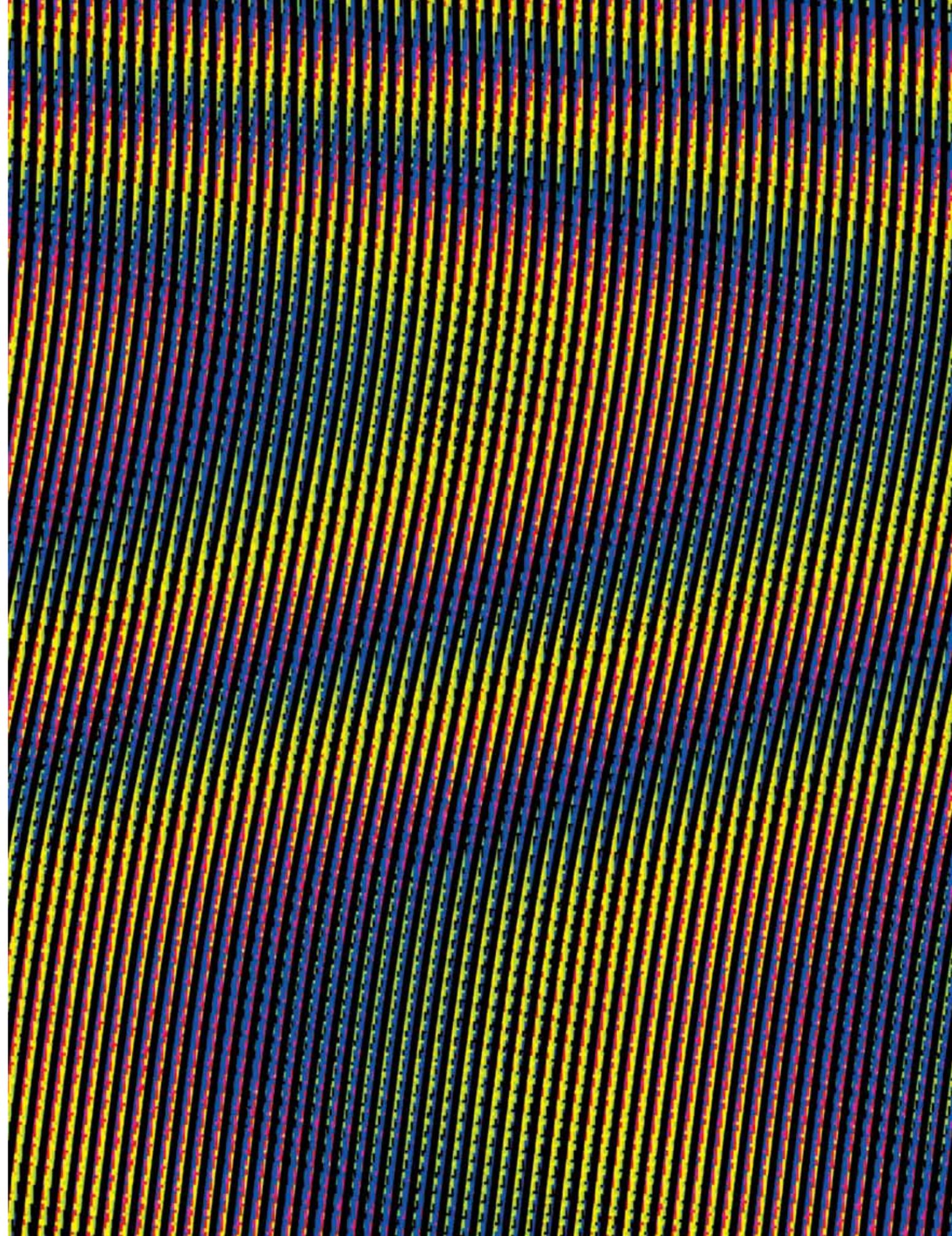
Sassoon is drawn to early computer graphics because of their strong physicality articulated via limited means. For example, the colour grey was originally made by placing white and black pixels next to each other, varying their density to create the desired shade. Even though the process effectively produced a variety of tone the isolated white or black pixels remained visible, revealing themselves as a vibrating image of squares and lines, and thus creating an accidental field of movement. For Sassoon such unintentional effects provide the basis for his own abstract arrangements using similar base elements as a means to represent complex forms.

The Moiré pattern designed for the Yaletown-Roundhouse Station is formed by the physical layering of a symmetrical configuration of vertical, curved black lines on top of a coloured pixelated background. With no focal point the mural is activated by the movement of the viewer. As commuters pass by the two overlapping planes, horizontal waves appear to undulate rhythmically across the image surface. Initially disorientating, sustained viewing creates an immersive effect, altering our usual encounter with the entrance of the station, notionally erasing its glass side as if to reveal another dimension.

Sassoon's abstractions are rooted in the 'real', always based in some representational form, their movement reminiscent of nature and tied to the landscape. As one image plane interferes with the other, waves, clouds scudding across the sky, a field of grass blowing in the wind or other meteorological and atmospheric occurrences are suggested. Virtual graphics are transformed into physical manifestations, pixel-generated movements translated into architectural interventions. We are momentarily transported.

Nicolas Sassoon was born in 1981. He regularly works online and is a member of the artist and design collective Computers Club. His work has been exhibited at Axiom Centre for New and Experimental Media, Boston (2010); Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, Portland Art Museum and SOMA, Mexico City (all 2011). Locally he has shown in the New Forms Festival and *Every Letter in the Alphabet* (both 2010). Online exhibitions include *SPAMM* at Spamm.fr and a solo exhibition entitled *TIDES* at bubblebyte.org. Upcoming exhibitions will be held at Preteen Gallery, Mexico; The Sunday Painter, London and Western Front, Vancouver.

Opposite  
**Nicolas Sassoon**  
WAVES (2012)  
Proposal for the Canada Line





## Josephine Meckseper

*American Leg*  
Window Spaces  
Continues to September 2, 2012

The exhibition is generously supported by the  
Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen e.V.

Above  
**Josephine Meckseper**  
*American Leg* (2012)  
Installation view. Copyright Josephine  
Meckseper and VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.  
Courtesy Andrea Rosen Gallery, New York;  
Timothy Taylor Gallery, London and Galerie  
Reinhard Hauff, Stuttgart. Photograph by  
Scott Massey.

Josephine Meckseper's first exhibition in Canada continues in the street front window vitrines. Combinations of mass-produced objects and artefacts both uses and undermines the language of consumer display, and is seen coupled with appropriated design elements, in particular, texts set in a typeface referencing Jugendstil, an artistic style in Germany within the broader tradition of Art Nouveau. By connecting contemporary consumer culture to the historic avant-garde Meckseper underlines a consideration of the everyday as a form of aesthetic and political resistance to the mainstream.

This over-arching theme also speaks to a more specific local past. References to Vancouver's indigenous origins are reflected in a number of sculptures loosely reminiscent of the vertical forms of the North West Coast totem-pole or to a trapper and his prized catch. With these associations, Meckseper pays homage to an exchange system all but lost — that of bartering and gift trade within large communities.

This year the Contemporary Art Gallery will again host an extraordinary evening at the Rosewood Hotel Georgia including an art auction featuring work by more than 40 Canadian and international artists, both emerging and established.

This spectacular night is an important fundraising event that supports the CAG in its crucial role, ongoing since 1971, as the longest standing free public art gallery dedicated exclusively to presenting contemporary visual art in Vancouver.

### ***Against Nature***

**24<sup>th</sup> Annual Gala Dinner and Art Auction**

**Saturday November 3, 2012**

Tickets go on sale in September, priced individually at \$250 or \$2250 for a table of ten.

## Public events

All public events are free and suitable for a general audience.

Unless otherwise stated all take place at the Contemporary Art Gallery.

## Exhibition openings

**Sarah Browne, *How to Use Fool's Gold***

**Nicholas Sassoon, *WAVES***

**Thursday July 12, 7-10pm**

Join us to celebrate the opening of our new exhibitions.

## Artist talk

**Sarah Browne**

**Saturday July 14, 2pm**

Artist Sarah Browne gives a formal lecture on her work exploring the critical underpinning and key themes to her recent work and Contemporary Art Gallery's installation.

## Feedback series

This series invites cultural and critical producers to present thoughts and ideas rooted in their own interests and practices, and invites audiences to join in the conversations that will explore relevant contemporary issues, theories, ideas and culture.

**Damian Moppett: *History and its Sculpture***

**Tuesday, June 26, 7pm**

Artist Damian Moppett draws from his own practice as he tours the Matthew Monahan exhibition and talks about the many practices of sculpture and its contemporary relationship within history and art.

**Gareth James: *The One and the Many***

**Tuesday, July 17, 7pm**

Prompted by Josephine Meckseper's work, artist, writer and Associate Professor Gareth James speaks to the theoretical and experimental methodologies that underpin his own practice to investigate the artistic considerations which emerge when one artist considers the work of another.

## Guided visits

Guided visits are open to the public, providing free opportunities to engage with exhibitions and develop new skills for interpreting contemporary art.

We also encourage visits from primary and secondary schools, ESL groups, university and college students and community groups.

For more information or to book a guided visit for your group, contact [info@contemporaryartgallery.ca](mailto:info@contemporaryartgallery.ca) or telephone 604 681 2700.

**Heidi Reitmaier**

**Sunday, July 1, 3pm**

Curator and educator, Heidi Reitmaier explores the work of Josephine Meckseper and Matthew Monahan in relationship to other contemporary cultural practices.

**Nigel Prince**

**Saturday, July 21, 3 pm**

CAG Director Nigel Prince gives a tour of current exhibitions.

**Jenifer Pappararo**

**Saturday, August 4, 3pm**

CAG Curator, Jenifer Pappararo gives a talk on the work of Josephine Meckseper exploring her recent installation in the gallery windows.

**Jill Henderson**

**Sunday, August 12, 3pm**

CAG Gallery Coordinator Jill Henderson discusses the current exhibitions.

**Patricia Huijnen**

**Saturday, September 1, 3pm**

A guided visit of the exhibitions in French led by CAG volunteer and educator Patricia Huijnen.

**Jenifer Pappararo**

**Saturday, September 8, 3pm**

CAG Curator, Jenifer Pappararo gives a tour of the Nicholas Sassoon off-site work *WAVES*.

**Sarah Browne**

*Carpet for the Irish Pavilion at the Venice Biennale (2009)*

Surplus wool and linen stock from Donegal Carpets Factory  
300 x 300 x 2.5cm

16mm film on DVD, b/w, silent, 18'03"

Installation view at *Ireland Venice*, Istituto Santa Maria della Pietà, Venice, 2009  
Collection Kildare County Council



## Other events

### Audio Feedback

June 9 to September 2, 2012

#### Contemporary Art Gallery

What do you get if you invite an angry anarchist garage band duo, a virtuosic pianist / singer / songwriter, an architect turned spoken word poet, a poet slam champ and a playwright? Mark Charles, Irene Chou, Mike Johnson, Natasha King, Josephine Mitchell and Michael Wadham from The IGNITE! Mentorship Program at The Cultch are joined by Edward Top, composer-in-residence from the VSO and Brady Marks, sound artist and radio presenter to work at VIVO Media Arts Centre to create audio responses to the CAG's current exhibitions. From prose and poetry to song, these audio works show how contemporary art can generate new forms of thinking and creativity, and for the visitor, in tandem with a gallery visit, create new meanings and different kinds of experiences. This program is made in collaboration with The Cultch's Youth Program, Vancouver Symphony Orchestra and VIVO Media Arts Centre.

### Sarah Browne: *Scarcity Radio Vancouver*

July 14 to September 2, 2012

*Scarcity Radio Vancouver* is a one-off four day intensive workshop and project developed with artist Sarah Browne. Teens from the IGNITE! Mentorship Program at the Cultch will work alongside a group from VIVO Media Arts Centre as well as individuals from *Slow Boat* at Ikon Gallery in Birmingham. The artists will co-produce an artwork and independently create a series of sound-works for broadcast on the *Scarcity Radio* internet channel. This unique project will include sound artists, economists, geographers and others to explore the notion of scarcity and produce a series of experiences that ask questions about the world around us. This program is made in collaboration with VIVO Media Arts Centre and *Slow Boat*, Ikon Gallery, Birmingham.

### *How to Use Fool's Gold*

[www.scarcityradio.org](http://www.scarcityradio.org)

[www.ikonslowboat.com](http://www.ikonslowboat.com)

July 14 to August 31, 2012

The exhibition also gives its name to a new film developed by Sarah Browne as part of her residency as lead artist with *Slow Boat*, Ikon's Youth Programme. Released online in a series of episodes throughout July and August to coincide with the exhibition at the CAG, this work has evolved through her research project with the group, *Scarcity Radio*. Set in a little-used geology museum, the work explores links between metaphors of mining and telecommunications to challenge our understanding of scarcity, partly in response to last year's riots in Birmingham, UK, as well as those in the 1980s.

Cover

Sarah Browne

*A Model Society* (2007)

35mm slide installation, looped

*Boredom* modeled by Vignir Thor Gudmundsson

Courtesy of the artist

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Open Tuesday to Sunday 12 to 6pm  
Free admission

The Abraham Rogatnick Library is open to the public by appointment

The Contemporary Art Gallery is generously supported by the Canada Council for the Arts, the City of Vancouver, and the Province of British Columbia through the BC Arts Council and the BC Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch. We are grateful for the support of Vancouver Foundation and our members, donors, and volunteers.

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