

edge of thinking about museums and their work, honours that long time frame. And the answer to her question is yes. The art is talking to us. Please, let it not be a cry in the wilderness for the sake of expediency. What museums need is not corporate streamlining or more marketing money. They need to build a climate for better listening. RICHARD RHODES

## Lyla Rye

◀◀ CAMBRIDGE GALLERIES, CAMBRIDGE

Women have collected, recycled and transformed things from everyday life into art for centuries. Quilts, for instance, were created from scraps and pieces from clothes too worn-out to wear, or as a way of saving something of special significance. The items were often ordinary, everyday garments and the quilt became a visual record of the family's life. Historically, the same can be said of needleworks, rugs and scrapbooks.

Lyla Rye's exhibition at the Cambridge Galleries brought these art forms and processes to mind. With a background in architecture and a degree from the San Francisco Art Institute, Rye has established herself as a compelling installation and conceptual artist. The birth of her daughter Lena four years ago acted as the catalyst for a continuing body of work.

Consisting of four separate video installations, this exhibition, "Flesh and Blood," shows how Rye has taken elements from her experiences as a mother and an artist and transformed them into work that has been called both engaging and disturbing. Rye shows her daughter engaging in such ordinary activities as nursing, smiling, eating ice cream and playing. She has taken these moments, recorded on video, and "quilted" them together. Rye, however, doesn't just record an activity. Her work examines the psychology of space, the divide between the public and private realms and the relationship between muse/model and artist.

*Noodge* (2000) is a cropped shot of 10-month-old Lena nursing. The focus is clearly on Lena's expression, which seems remarkably self-aware. The soundtrack of normal baby-nursing noises has been adjusted and slowed down to an adult pitch. The work's emphasis on the act of breastfeeding brings it into the public realm in defiance of societal conventions, which even now try to sequester nursing mothers and babies in little rooms far away from everyone else.

The now infamous *Byte* (2002) depicts the artist and daughter playing a favourite game of singing into each other's mouths. While technically and compositionally referencing how the media recontextualizes events, this work examines the balance of power within a parent-child relationship. Rye's surprised expression of pain as Lena bites her lip and Lena's triumphant smile at the end of this clip call into question who truly has the upper hand. It is interesting, in light of the artist's concern with perception, that this has become a work to which people tend to react according to what they have heard or read about it, rather than to what they actually see.

In what might be considered a female tradition, family has inspired Rye to find a unique means of artistic expression within the experience of daily life. However, her work reaches beyond the personal to explore and critique conventions and prejudices relating to parenting as found within the art world and contemporary society. VIRGINIA M. EICHHORN

## Richard Gorman

◀◀ CHRISTOPHER CUTTS GALLERY, TORONTO

Who is afraid of a cliché? Certainly not Richard Gorman, who exploits the threadbare icon of a lone tree in the landscape without a hint of irony in his latest show, continuing a theme that he began to explore in his *Orpheus* series of 1998.

As a metaphor of the human condition, the lone tree is a subject that harks back to the early German Romanticism of Caspar David Friedrich. This heroic tree was given a Canadian twist with Tom Thomson's *Jack Pine*, to which the windblown tree shapes of Gorman's *Orpheus* paintings owe



LYLA RYE *Siren* 2000 Video 5 mins

*Byte* 2002 Video 5 mins

