

LYLA RYE ERRATIC ROOM

NOVEMBER 5, 2010 – JANUARY 16, 2011

LYLA RYE is Toronto based installation artist, who began her studies in architecture. She received a BFA from York University, and an MFA from the San Francisco Art Institute. Her work has been exhibited across Canada including at the Power Plant, Toronto; the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax; the Esplanade Gallery, Medicine Hat; the Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Kingston; the Southern Alberta Art Gallery, Lethbridge, the Confederation Centre of the Arts, Charlottetown and the Textile Museum of Canada, Toronto. Her international exhibitions include shows in San Francisco, New York, Adelaide, Paris, and Berlin. She has work in the collections of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, York University, Robert McLaughlin Gallery, The Tom Thomson Art Gallery, Harbourfront Centre and Cadillac Fairview Corporation.

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Acknowledgements

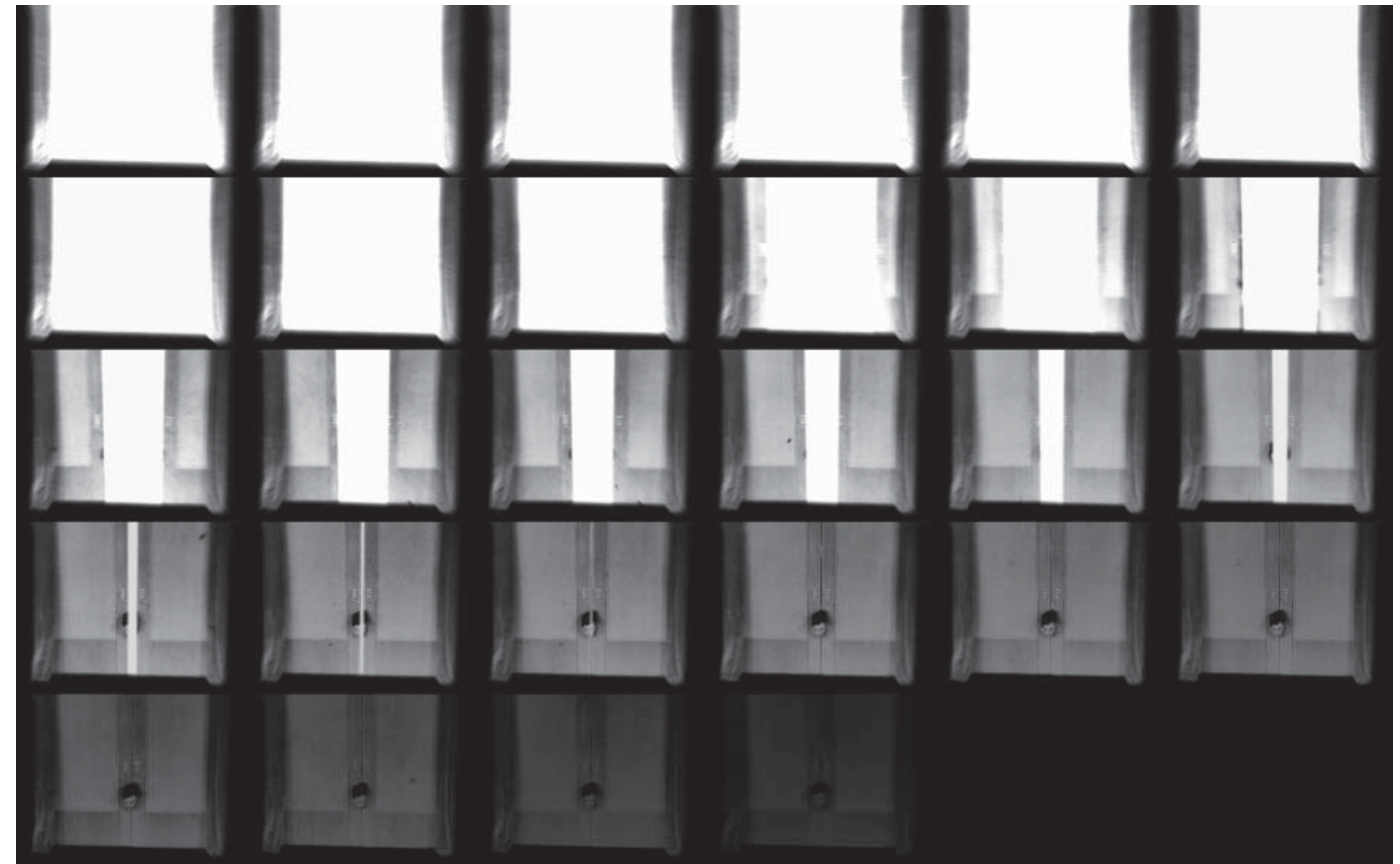
Thanks to the Ontario Arts Council for their support of this project.

COVER: video stills, *Erratic Room*, 2010; INSIDE: video still, *Erratic Room*, 2010; REVERSE: installation view, *Erratic Room*, 2010 ; ABOVE: video still, *Erratic Room*, 2010

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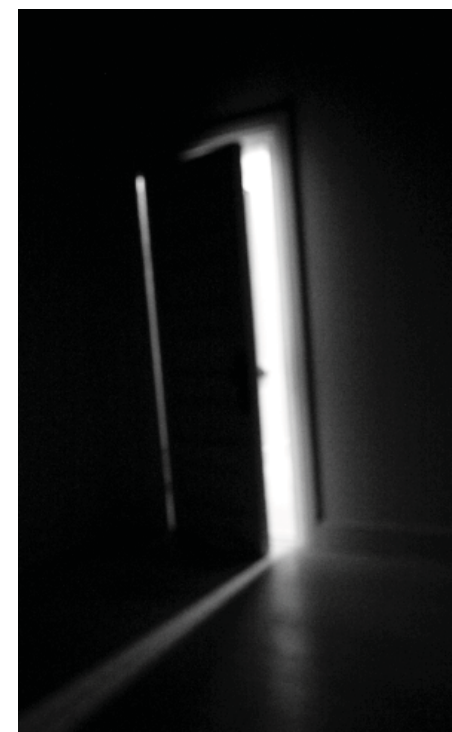
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Erratic Room responds to our society's current anxieties about personal security and the stability of the spaces within which we seek refuge. In an earthquake zone like Victoria, this extends even to a lack of faith in the stability of the ground on which we build. I have long been interested in our subliminal expectations of architectural space and have focused my practice on the creation of ephemeral installations where these assumptions can surface and be examined.

While living in San Francisco, I was introduced to earthquake culture and found myself developing a heightened awareness of the architectural space around me and its relative structural strength. Although I do not live in an earthquake zone any longer, I am reminded of this mindset by the current hyper-security conscious society I live in. People are pushed from subway platforms, trucks ram into houses, toxins leach into foundations and fear of terrorism lurks in people's consciousness.

Erratic Room is a compilation of numerous video projections of architectural elements that appear sporadically in various parts of the room: a door, a window, a wall or section of floor. Doors and windows are places where we expect the boundaries of a room to be porous and allow the outside world to enter. Simultaneously they are inherently the most structurally sound elements in a room. Walls and floor provide clear divisions of space that seem so logical, stable and solid that to momentarily experience their vulnerability is disturbing. In this piece the videos are largely unpeopled, so the viewer is cast as actor in my video stage set.

I conceived of the videos as holes where the outside seeps into a darkened space. The videos, fragmented and reflected into different parts of the room, create a space that no longer gives a sense of enclosure. Events are not



synced with each other nor with the audio so that they occur in a randomized sequence that will never recur the same way twice. Sporadic bursts of action might be followed by long periods of darkness. Even gravity itself occasionally shifts. Incongruity and humour emerge when evidence of the filming, or Buster Keaton himself, enters the frame.

While all of the video fragments are similarly leached of colour, they come from a range of sources. There is footage shot from a dollhouse, digital animations, fragments of sets from Buster Keaton films (*Electric House* and *One Week*), shadows and reflections from my home at night and even amateur disaster footage that has been posted online. These all share an element of unreality for me. The video events are either excruciatingly slow or happen so quickly that one can barely register the occurrence. Brought together by a similar visual treatment, it is as if they are seen in one's peripheral vision or seen when one is awakened suddenly from a deep sleep. Gradually, these ephemeral illusions subtly erode one's sense of balance and one's confidence in the solidity of the space.

Like an erratic boulder, the installation becomes an architectural event, carried by the force of societal anxiety and deposited in the imagination.