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Video Produced and Edited by
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Performers / Faye Rae Brookes
Naomi Cornelius
Stephanie Yanciw

Mentor / Sandee Moore

First Video Fund / Video Pool
Winnipeg, Manitoba

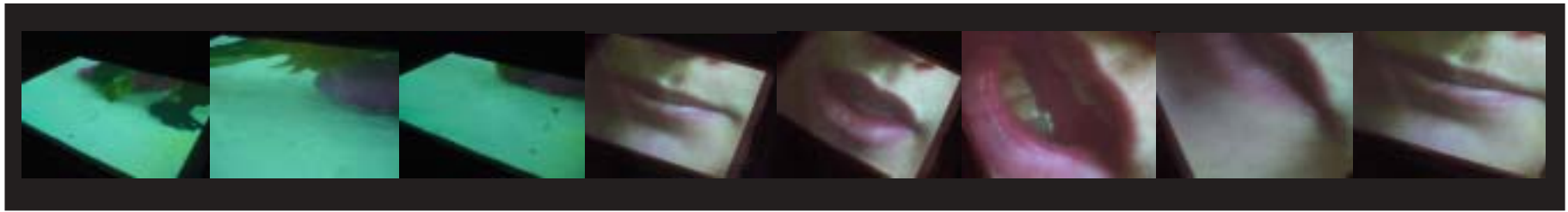
Manitoba Arts Council



KAREN CORNELIUS

Xchanges Gallery, Victoria, British Columbia
September 2-16, 2005

Annex Gallery, Winnipeg, Manitoba
November 10-28, 2005



Printmaking has been my discipline of choice within my art practice. The transfer of image and texture from one surface to another, as well as the repetition of image and the layering of thought and image, attracts me to the medium. Although trained in traditional printmaking methods I have progressively pushed the traditional boundaries, exploring non-traditional materials and methods.

Sugar, a multi-phased interdisciplinary project about disturbed adolescent girls, demanded that I move beyond printmaking into what was for me previously unexplored areas of art making. I participated in the MAWA (Mentoring Artists for Women's Art) mid-career mentorship programme with Mindy Yan Miller, an artist, member of Galerie Article and instructor at Concordia University in Montreal. This opportunity gave me the confidence to pursue this project. The project took me into the areas of performance and video art, although the transfer of the text from the sidewalk as mono prints kept me connected to my original art practice.

Video has proved to be a medium not unlike printmaking in that layering images is part of the process. But there is a difference in that the layering takes place not only in two-dimensional space, on a single image or frame, but also in time as the image moves forward.

Awarded a First Video Fund Grant through Video Pool, I gained the technical knowledge and support to accomplish this project. I was matched with Sandee Moore, an accomplished video artist and acting director of Video Pool, as my mentor, who provided excellent support.

I was prompted to create this work as I found myself with a front row seat as a committed parent involved with a stake in my daughter's and her friend's turbulent transitional period of adolescence. I began collecting text from adolescent girls. I hired a 14 year-old girl to write the difficult

text in powdered pigment, which is temporary in nature, on the sidewalks of the seemingly quiet and perfectly manicured neighbourhood of River Heights in Winnipeg. The text exposes the tortured emotional reality of some girls during this period in which they navigate their own developing sense of self, their relationships with each other, with the opposite sex and the world at large. The text revealed that all is not perfect behind the ordered neighbourhood façade. I shot footage of the performance and with my recently acquired technical skills created an art video.

I chose to project the video on sugar because of the childhood rhyme in which little girls are expected to be "sugar and spice and everything nice." When setting up a trial installation I discovered the wonder of writing in the sugar, which prompted me to provide the viewers of the exhibition with the opportunity to write their own text in the gallery setting.

I set out to expose this tumultuous period for a girl coming of age in a sexualized and media saturated culture which puts incredible pressure on girls to measure up to a virtually unattainable standard of appearance, to be sophisticated, to use chemicals (drugs) and to be sexually active. In a society such as ours which treats women as objects and allows high rates of violence, sexual harassment and sexual assault, girls can become alienated from their developing bodies and form a distorted sense of self in their struggle to gain some power and protection while negotiating adolescence.

The struggle to deal with this difficult transitional period can manifest itself in eating disorders, self-mutilation, depression, suicidal tendencies and psychosis.

I want girls and their parents who identify with this installation project to know that they are not alone.