



GEOFFREY MATTIE *Jack Of Spades*, from the series *The Fraternity Of The Lantern* 2005, Numeric Chromogenic Print, 112 cm x 140 cm. Edition of 3

Geoffrey Mattie

Jack Of Spades

The *Jack Of Spades* illustrates a man in work clothes and rubber boots, digging a hole in a tangled field by the light of a kerosene lantern. The encroaching darkness and shadows seem to feed on the light, like a cancerous growth. The impenetrable black creates a sense of claustrophobia, and the overall tone of the image is one of foreboding and secrecy. Modern playing cards have their origin in the Tarot deck used commonly today for the purpose of fortune telling. The Tarot equivalent of the “Jack Of Spades” conveys a message of caution in fortune telling, and is also indicative of spying and secret information, thus reinforcing the element of secrecy in the image. The significant titles of these two images furthers the concept towards the series’ identity. *The Fraternity Of The Lantern* is indicative of a set; a duo, fraternal twins in exceptionally different moods, yet similar situations. It is a brotherhood denoting stark similarities together with strong differences. The series portrays a sense of duality and opposition: summer versus winter; earth versus sky; study verses labour.

GEOFFREY MATTIE Originally from Antigonish, Nova Scotia, Geoffrey Mattie moved to Montréal, Québec, in 1999 to obtain formal training in conceptual art photography. In 2005, he received his BFA with a major in photography from Concordia University. Geoffrey Mattie received an artistic development grant from DuMaurier Arts Council, and has been featured in several exhibitions within the Montréal area. He currently lives and works in Montréal.

VITRINES

IVAN JURAKIC is a visual artist, writer and curator at Cambridge Galleries. He has an Honours BA from the University of Guelph and an MFA from the State University of New York at Buffalo. His writing has been published in Fuse Magazine, Espace Sculpture, Lola, Mix Magazine, C International and in numerous exhibition publications. Recent exhibitions include: *Reading Hamilton*, you me gallery, Hamilton, ON (2006); *Two Degrees of Separation*, University of Waterloo Art Gallery, Waterloo, ON (2005); *The Release*, Royal Botanical Gardens, Hamilton, ON (2005); *CAFKA.05: X Industria*, Kitchener City Hall, Kitchener, ON (2005); *Foreword*, Grimsby Public Art Gallery, Grimsby, ON (2004); *Open*, Arcadia University Art Gallery, Philadelphia, PA (2004); *Reclamation*, Big Orbit Gallery, Buffalo, NY (2004); *Future Cities*, Art Gallery of Hamilton off-site, Hamilton, ON (2004); and *Ice Follies*, WKP Kennedy Gallery off-site, North Bay, ON (2004). Jurakic has an upcoming exhibition in the Project Room at the Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, Toronto, ON. Jurakic lives in Hamilton, Ontario.

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COVER
IVAN JURAKIC *Avatar*, 2004/2007
clear light bulbs, lamp fixtures,
electrical wire 274 x 213 x 91

AUBREY REEVES balances a career as an artist, curator and arts administrator in Toronto, Ontario. She is the Programming Director at Trinity Square Video, one of Canada’s oldest artist-run media art centres. Aubrey completed her MA at the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College in New York and also holds a BA from University of Toronto. In 2006, Aubrey premiered *Dagbok* at the Kasseler Documentary Film und VideoFest in Kassel, Germany. *Dagbok* will also be exhibited at Artcite Inc. in Windsor and at the Khyber Art Society in Halifax. In the summer of 2007, Aubrey undertook a creative residency at the Banff Centre for the Arts where she developed a multi-disciplinary performance and installation called *The Diamond Maker*; or, *the Alchemist’s Daughter* based on Victorian magic lantern shows. She is currently working on a 16mm hand-painted experimental animation entitled *Glide*.

SARA ANGELOCCI is a photo and video artist living in Toronto. She completed her BA at the University of Guelph and her MFA at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. She has exhibited her photography across Canada including exhibitions at *Le Mois de la Photo* in Montréal, Ace Art in Winnipeg, Vu in Quebec City, the Toronto Photographer’s Workshop, the MacLaren Art Centre, the Art Gallery of Hamilton and the Richmond Art Gallery. Sara’s videos have screened across Canada, Europe and Hong Kong. Sara has participated in artist residencies at NSCAD (Halifax), the Banff Centre and at Biz-Art in Shanghai, China. Her work is represented by the Wynick/Tuck Gallery and V-Tape in Toronto.

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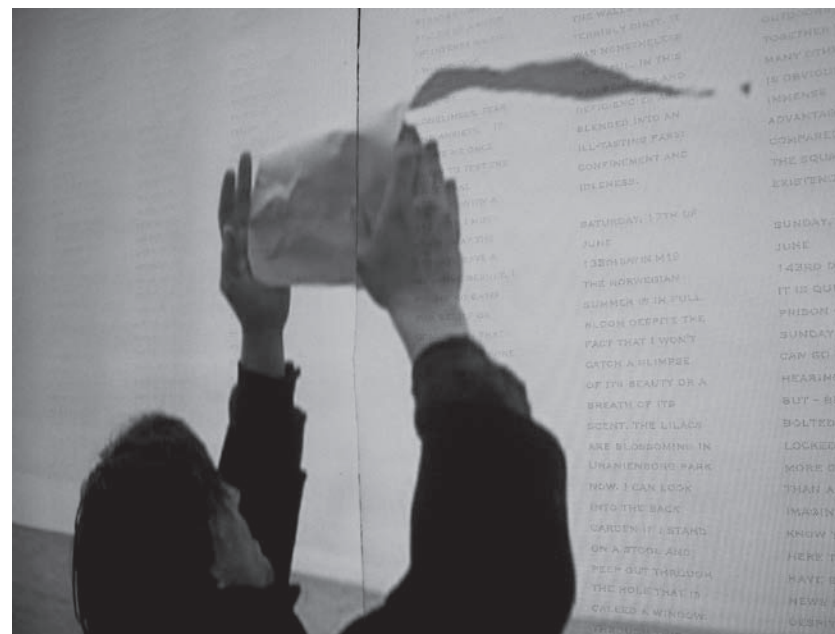
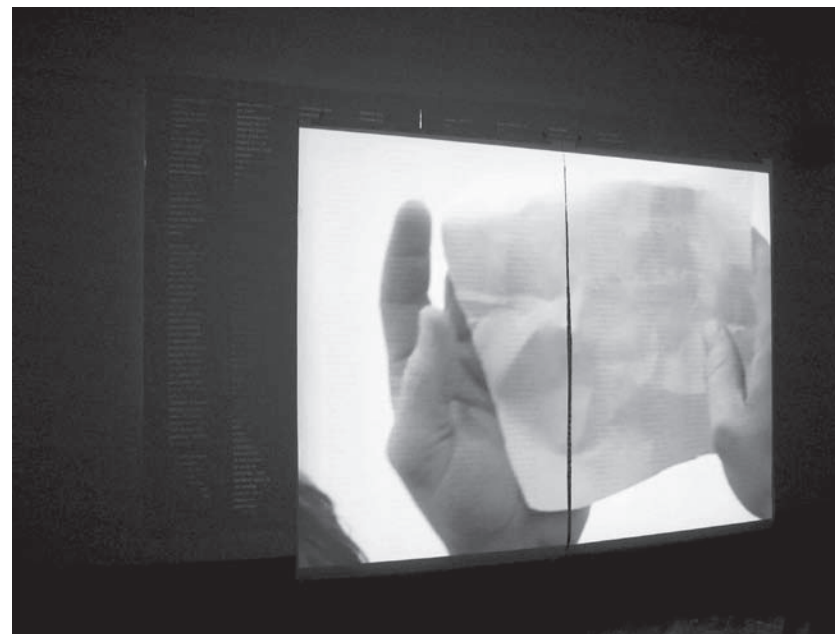
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AUBREY REEVES *Dagbok*, 2005, video installation, size variable



AUBREY REEVES

IVAN JURAKIC

Constellations

Curated by **SARA ANGELOCCI**

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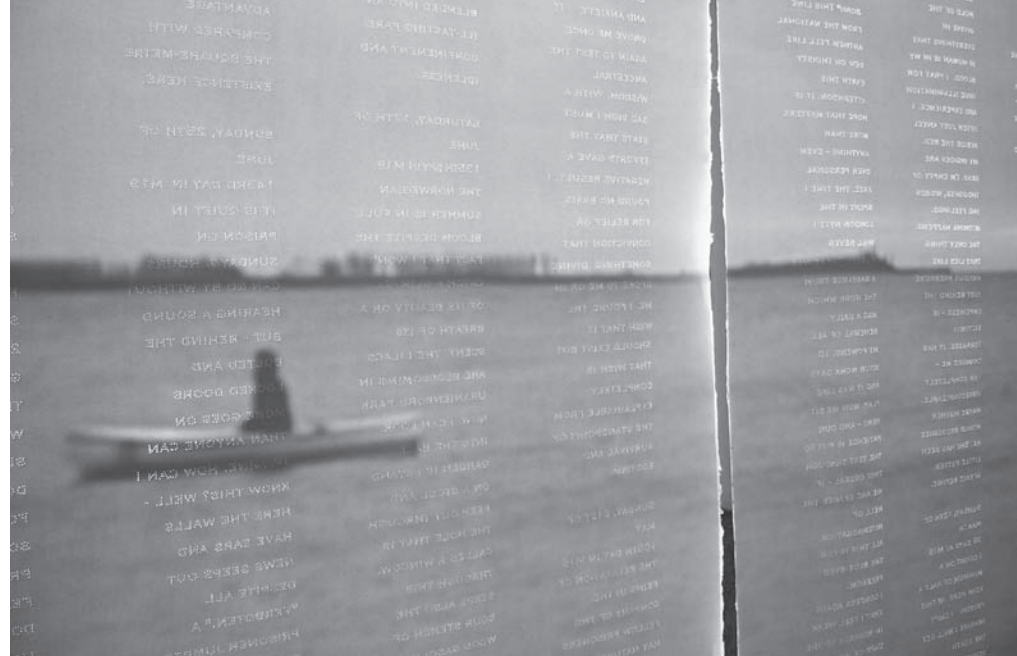
Constellations

by Sara Angelucci

LIKE THE BIG DIPPER with individual stars aligning into form, the works in *Constellations* create images using elemental forms of light—a beam traversing a pin-prick, an incandescent filament, or an exposed silver-halide particle. In Aubrey Reeves’ video installation *Dagbok* (diary) and Ivan Jurakic’s photo and sculptural installations *Reclamation* and *Avatar*, light coalesces into words, a photograph, an airplane, but in shifting your gaze they dissolve again into a galaxy of abstract flickerings.

The works in this exhibition were inspired by Second World War archival materials that reveal a glimmer of personal wartime experience. In *Dagbok*, Reeves presents the diary of Petter Moen an insurance man, who in wartime became the head of Oslo’s clandestine press. By 1944, Moen was the editor, top writer and distributor of *London Nytt*, one of the best and most widely circulated underground papers in Norway. On February 3rd of that year Moen was arrested by the Gestapo and imprisoned in Møllergt. 19 (M19) in Oslo where he spent eight months; the first four were spent in solitary confinement. Yet, Moen found a way to resist his oppressors by freely expressing his thoughts:

Thursday the 24th of February, the 21st day at M19
Guard held house inspection!! He didn’t find my diary. It hangs on the nail with the toilet paper. He didn’t find my pen. It’s a nail in the blackout curtain...¹



The ability to write was Moen’s only consolation while imprisoned, and the urge to do so was so great that he painstakingly formed letters by poking holes in rough lavatory paper. The raw nature of his method echoed his daily reality, each prick a conscious recording of his troubled thoughts on prison life, faith, his relationship with his wife Bella, and his fragile state of mind.

As the Allies advanced, the prisoners of M19 were hastily transferred to the ship *Westphalen*. At sea the ship hit a mine, killing all but five of the prisoners. Moen perished, but a cellmate who knew the diary’s hiding place survived and recovered it after the war.

The survival of Moen’s diary amidst the trauma of war is a marvel akin to that of Anne Frank’s or the recently published *Suite Francaise* by Irène Némirovsky. The wonder of these works is that in spite of brutal circumstances, their authors retain compassion and faith in the human spirit. In the midst of hell, Moen’s text offers us this gift:

Wednesday the 23rd of February
It is monstrously tempting to think eye for an eye “like for like” but victory lies in this: we were ourselves. They didn’t subdue us and they didn’t contaminate us. Oh heaven — those that got to live that day!!!
AFTERNOON
I prayed sincerely to God for my future that I may become something other than the trash I have been for my whole life. For me it’s salvation.

<AUBREY REEVES *Dagbok*, 2005, video installation, size variable

I pray such: Don’t let me be a wind that suddenly blows here and suddenly there but let me be the seed that matures.²

To both honour and empathize with Moen, Reeves adopted his arduous writing method. She spent six physically strenuous months repetitively poking holes to create a 90” x 72” projection screen featuring excerpts from the journal. For Reeves, this slow practice offered a deep meditation on the text. In the installation, Moen’s diary excerpts are lit with a video projection, rendering it a literal illuminated manuscript. In a soundless space, with an image of a man adrift against an endless sea, we peer through Moen’s sheets of fragile paper, and also his thoughts. Could our contemplation answer Moen’s prayer that his seed may mature? The pin-pricks bring to mind Roland Barthes’ *punctum*; the detail in a photograph which is emotionally piercing.³ Considering *Dagbok*’s origin, each laborious hole is heart-wrenching.

In the related works *Reclamation* and *Avatar*, Ivan Jurakic takes inspiration from a found photograph of a post war salvage crew that includes amongst the men, Jurakic’s father (he stands at the far left in the cockpit). According to the artist, the downed German plane is a Messerschmidt ME-410, an axis bomber used in the last years of the war. *Avatar*’s floating structure is modeled after it. As we observe the young men standing amongst the plane’s ruins, the Nazi symbol emblazoned on its tail, we try to imagine the story behind the image. While we all know broad facts about the war, we wonder what this particular story is about.

Like Reeves, Jurakic’s work is inspired not by the history of the Second World War, but by an individual’s experience of it. In recent bodies of work, Jurakic’s projects seek to reconcile his father’s unresolved stories. In viewing them, one senses his profound desire to understand and connect with his family history, as he mines photographs and recalls anecdotes for clues.

Printed on transparent material and suspended at a distance from the wall, *Reclamation* casts a ghostly second image. In “hovering between presence and absence” the work suggests that which can be grasped and that which will forever remain unknowable.⁴ Jurakic knows scant details of his father’s war experience. As a young Bosnian-Croat growing up prior to the formation of the Republic of Yugoslavia, a region in political turmoil, (Bosnia and Croatia allied with Germany, while Serbia allied with Russia) the artist’s father Filip Jurakic went to Germany at the age of sixteen seeking work. With so many men conscripted into the German war effort, there was a demand for itinerant workers. Why else would a young man knowingly go into a war zone? Ivan Jurakic has sought to unravel this question and, as he says, by extension Croatia and his father’s inadvertent complicity with Nazism. The photograph used in *Reclamation* was taken after Germany’s defeat in 1946, and remains as a potent reminder of the presence of the enemy, victim and victor in this exhibition and of the complex relationships created by war. For those of us of European descent, Jurakic’s

² Petter Moen, *Dagbok*, Oslo: J.W. Cappelens Forlag, 1949, p. 24-25. Translated by Rick Hyslop.

³ Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, New York: Hill and Wang, 1981, p. 27.

>IVAN JURAKIC *Avatar*, 2004/2007 clear light bulbs, lamp fixtures, electrical wire 274 x 213 x 91



questioning is also our own; how do our histories fit into this equation?

Although inspired by a malignant source, a plane from Germany’s infamous *Luftwaffe*, *Avatar* is dazzling. The plane, now a vague form, is stripped of its lethal mission and instead offers a wondrous stargazing experience. In the grounded plane’s transformation into light and air, we are directed upwards to examine each clear bulb, into the core of its elemental form. As the filaments flicker, we can begin to imagine one by one, individual stories of war, each floating bulb a soul. While there are still living witnesses to the traumas of the Second World War, relatives that we can talk to, our connection to these events remains personal—beyond mere “intellectual inquiry.”⁵ For us, as Daniel Mendelsohn writes, “...the dead are close enough to touch, yet frustratingly out of reach.”⁶ *Avatar*’s light guides us toward the possibility of transformation and healing, offering a place to contemplate and honour the victims of war.

How many suspended silver particles does it take to make a photograph, or pin pricks to make a word, or light bulbs to make an airplane? By placing us within a galaxy of constellations these works help us recognize our own smallness, and by implication something of greater significance beyond. In their ability to bring us close and take us far away, these artists ask us to examine the micro while pondering the infinite of the macro. The works in *Constellations* transport us on an existential journey of reconciliation. ■

⁵ Daniel Mendelsohn, “What Happened to Uncle Shmiel?” *New York Times Magazine*, July 14, 2002, p. 27.

⁶ Ibid.

¹ Petter Moen, *Dagbok*, Oslo: J.W. Cappelens Forlag, 1949, p. 25. Translated by Rick Hyslop.

⁴ Ivan Jurakic, Unpublished artist statement, 2004.