

Julianne Swartz

Gravity

May 5 – June 23, 2012

Josée Bienvenu Gallery is pleased to present Julianne's Swartz's third solo exhibition with the gallery. Julianne Swartz's work trades in the rough interface between body and building, interior and exterior, public displays and private activities, transcendence and abjection, containment and leakage: these seeming opposites exist in an uneasy, evocative alignment in her work, informing and transforming one another. Power resides in what you can't see or touch. Human frailty and our irrational impulses, the body and its sensorial extensions - the probing eye and the disembodied voice - are set loose to subversive, often poignant ends.

In this new body of work, lightness and weight define and defy each other. Gravity-a body's attraction towards the center of the earth- is the filament running through all the works. Some of the works push the limits of physical gravity very literally, and other works explore gravity metaphorically, as they refer to the limitations, fragility and endurance of the body, and the weight of human relationships. A sound element runs through many of the works. Verbal and nonverbal utterances, beats, pulses, staccato rhythms and tones of varying pitches populate the exhibition.

Surrogate (JS), *Surrogate (KRL)*, and *Surrogate (ARL)* are three figures, made of various configurations of cement blocks, standing together. The cast blocks vary from white to dark grey, some beaten and rough, some sparkling with mica. Each figure is built in the dimensions of one of the artist's immediate family members: herself, her husband, and their young daughter. Scores of clocks nested inside the blocks give a pulse to the figures. The relentless ticking invokes an acute sense of time passing.

A series of sculptures, *Stability Studies*, seek the far edge of precariousness. Spare constructions built with weights, wire, thread, magnets and ordinary objects, vehemently pursue balance and barely attain it. In *Stability Study (table)*, The weight of a rock allows an unbalanced table to stand as it elevates a quivering wire. In another sculpture, *Lean*, a steel rod defies reason as it leans towards a wall but doesn't touch it. *Composition for a Thin Membrane* is an anthropomorphic translucent screen with transducers and wires fixed within it. The whole surface resonates with sounds that transverse a space between inside and outside the body such as pre-verbal utterances. *Alma's Blanket* is a sound tapestry based in size and weave on an actual baby blanket. In this woven grid of colored electrical wires and tiny speakers, parallel voices lull with bits of song, whisper comforts and soothe fears.

With gravity and lightness, Swartz places equal importance upon negative space, ambient sound, interruptions of sculptural line, and the interface between outside and inside. Her work encourages a quizzical reconsideration of our relationship to our body, to each other and to our surroundings.

Julianne Swartz has exhibited internationally, including at Tate Liverpool, PS1/MoMA, the SculptureCenter, the New Museum of Contemporary Art, the Jewish Museum, the Indianapolis Museum of Art, Colby College Museum of Art, the Tang Museum, Skidmore College, and the 2004 Whitney Biennial at the Whitney Museum of American Art, NY. Current exhibitions include, *Digital Empathy*, a public project at the High Line, New York, *Miracle Report* at the Arizona State

University Art Museum, And *Good Night* at the Israel Museum, Jerusalem. This summer her work will be included in *Watch Your Step* at the Flag Foundation, New York. *Julianne Swartz: How Deep is Your*, a survey exhibition at the deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum, Massachusetts, will open in the fall of 2012 and will travel to the Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, Scottsdale, AZ. A full color monograph will accompany this exhibition.