

“The Kamloops Archipelago” *Court House, 2005*

Donald Lawrence

Court House, in Kamloops’ historic and former Law Courts, represents my interest in the coming together of artistic production and academic inquiry. *Court House* brought together projects by four artists (Panya Clark Espinal, David Hoffos, Ernie Kroeger, and Donald Lawrence) as a forum for presentations and discussions involving participants coming from such disciplines as Cultural Theory, English and Philosophy. Collectively, this research group was exploring notions of Vernacular Modes of Artistic Inquiry: the manner in which an individual’s (or a group’s) personal or localized manners of expression may be recognized against some larger context or set of politics. As Glen Lowry noted in his review of *PhotoGraphic Encounters* (an exhibition guest curated by Donald Lawrence and W.F. Garrett-Petts: Kamloops Art Gallery, 2002), the Vernacular is always articulated at the moment of performance – is always in flux. Further undercurrents of the groups’ discussions reside in questions of: Remembering and Forgetting, of Illusion and Reality, and of Home and the Homely.

From such discussions the *Court House* project emerged, as a means of further exploring these ideas in response to the tangible presence of the artists’ projects. Each of these projects was created for this venue and in some respect plays off an interest in water. In his essay, *Home Thoughts*, printed in an illustrated pamphlet as a discussion paper for the event, Bruce Baugh considered some of the thematic strains of the research group’s discussions in response to the artist’s preliminary work towards their installations. Many of these ideas intersect Celeste Olalquiaga’s consideration of nineteenth century visual culture in *The Artificial Kingdom: A Treasury of the Kitsch Experience*. Her presentation of “Third Nature or the End of Origins,” provided a segue into the audience’s engagement with the artists’ installations and the research group’s discussions by way of a panel discussion during the Court House project*.



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“Kamloops Archipelago,” for
Court House, preliminary model,
(cut-away view), 2005

* Three Research Assistants, Sarah Doyle, Dana Novak, and Serina Townsley worked on this project, with Dana Novak being primarily responsible for the design of the illustrated pamphlet.