

PHOTO, MEDIA AND DIGITAL ART

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For Immediate Release (January 12, 2015)

MYRIAM YATES PROBES A LEGENDARY HISTORIC SITE IN NEW EXHIBITION AT PREFIX

(Toronto) – Prefix Institute of Contemporary Art is pleased to present *Racetrack Superstar Ghost*, a solo exhibition by Québec artist **Myriam Yates**, curated by Scott McLeod. Composed of four related video installations, the show captures the shifting realities of the Hippodrome de Montréal—formerly one of the most important horse racing tracks in North America, now an overgrown and abandoned site. Yates uses this storied location to explore the multifaceted relationships between public and private space.

An **opening reception** will be held on **Thursday, February 5 from 7 to 10 PM** at Prefix, located at 401 Richmond Street West, Suite 124, Toronto. The artist and curator will be present. The gallery is open from Wednesday to Saturday, 12 to 5 PM, and admission is free. The exhibition continues until **March 28, 2015**.

During the first half of the twentieth century, the Hippodrome de Montréal was one of the city's main attractions. However, by the late twentieth century, it had suffered a number of setbacks, including a dramatic loss of clientele to the newly opened Casino de Montréal. With her documentarian impulse and keen interest in issues relating to public space and modernist architecture, Yates was drawn to the gradual transformations of this once-populated space. Over a span of seven years, she documented unique perspectives on the facility, both before and after its closure in 2009.

Occupants (2005), her first video work documenting the site, primarily focuses on the sports announcer and camera operator who viewed the races from an elevated observatory. At intervals, these scenes are contrasted with static shots of the vast, unoccupied spaces of the Hippodrome's interior. Exhibited in a dual video installation format, this work employs strategies of mirroring and doubling to produce a fictive narrative out of an otherwise realist work.

The social history of the site is considered in the dual projection *Amphithéâtre* (2010). Filmed in wide-screen format, one component slowly tracks, from varying perspectives, the empty interior of the amphitheatre, while the second, in standard format, depicts the careful grooming of a horse after a race. This quiet, intimate moment contrasts with the vastness and austerity of the vacant space.

A Space Between Mirrors (2010) consists of a series of shots of the Hippodrome's Le Centaure restaurant, a large area situated beside the stands overlooking the racetrack. Thoughtfully using the mirrors within the environment, the artist captures increasingly abstracted reflections, through formal play between the lens, mirrors and empty space.

Racetrack Superstar Ghost (2011), a single-channel video installation, documents the Hippodrome de Montréal when it became the site for a concert by Irish rock band U2. Unlike the gradual evolution of the Hippodrome itself—shaped over many decades by successive generations of Montréalers—a single iteration of U2's world concert tour was parachuted into the community. The only possible relationship of the community's members to the event was as consumers of an imported spectacle.

About the Artist

Myriam Yates is a visual artist who lives and works in Sherbrooke, Québec. She received two BFAs and an MFA in Visual and Media Arts from the Université du Québec à Montréal. Her work has been exhibited in solo exhibitions at the Foreman Art Gallery of Bishop's University (Sherbrooke, QC), Optica, A Centre for Contemporary Art (Montréal), Centre des arts actuels Skol (Montréal) and La

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Centrale Galerie Powerhouse (Montréal), as well as in major group exhibitions including Le Mois de la Photo à Montréal and the Québec Triennial at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal. Her videos have also been screened at numerous festivals and events, including the International Festival of Documentary Film Buenos Aires, Kassel Dokfest (Kassel, Germany), the Images Festival (Toronto), Rencontres Internationales (Paris/Berlin/Madrid) and the Regina Festival of Cinematic Arts, among others. Winner of the Cyberpitch contest at the Festival du nouveau cinéma (Montréal), she has also participated in the Banff New Media Institute's Interactive Screen lecture series and has recently completed a video triptych for the headquarters of Cirque du Soleil in Montréal.

About the Curator

Scott McLeod is an independent writer and curator based in Toronto. The founding director of Prefix Institute of Contemporary Art, he focuses on contemporary practices, with a specialization in photographic, media and digital art. With the support of the Ontario Arts Council, he is currently writing *Land and Its Discontents*, a book of collected essays on the relationships between art, property and spatial politics.

About Prefix

Prefix Institute of Contemporary Art is a public art gallery and arts publishing house based in Toronto. A registered charitable organization, Prefix fosters the appreciation and understanding of contemporary photographic, media and digital arts through exhibitions, publications, public programmes and related activities.

Acknowledgements

For their support of *Racetrack Superstar Ghost*, Prefix gratefully acknowledges its Official Catering Sponsor à la Carte Kitchen and its Official Hotel Sponsor the Hotel Le Germain. Prefix also acknowledges the assistance of the Canada Council for the Arts and the City of Toronto through the Toronto Arts Council.

For their kind loan of supporting equipment, Prefix gratefully acknowledges YYZ, Toronto.

For more information, print-ready images or to schedule an interview with the artist or curator, please contact:

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