

PHOTO, MEDIA AND DIGITAL ART

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Photo Magazine, Visual, Audio and Surround Art Galleries.
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For Immediate Release (June 2, 2008)

ANDREW WRIGHT SURVEYS THE ART OF WAR

(Toronto) – In celebration of summer, **Prefix Institute of Contemporary Art** is pleased to present the world premiere of *Survey* by Canadian multi-media artist **Andrew Wright**. Curated by **Chantal Rousseau**, this exhibition consists of photographs and videos documenting Wright's experience with the Canadian Forces Artists Program (CFAP) presented alongside a recent video made using homemade rockets.

Andrew Wright's videos and photographs that document his time in the CFAP look to traditions in Canadian war art while seeking out contemporary truths about the military. Wright presents the daily events, people and sites aboard the HMCS Toronto in an attempt to expose human elements and banal details, as well as real-time military drills eerily reminiscent of jarring news footage, Hollywood dramaturgy and constructed environments found in video games. The imagery incites provocative questioning and exchange about civilian understanding of reality and representation concerning the military, including tacit references to the propagandist undertones of traditional Canadian war art.

While aboard the frigate, Wright was given access to material usually reserved for the media, finding a parallel with the contemporary practice of embedding journalists within military operations – a venture that often assumes a human-interest angle, preying upon our emotions for sympathetic responses. Wright approaches representation in a different way; while he detaches himself from overt political signification, he employs documentary traditions in his photographs and video series. Works such as *Mike Grace, Able Seaman, Cook* (2008) and *Casualty in the Fridge Flats* (2008) invite the viewer to import their own approaches toward an understanding of the military-real.

Another facet of *Survey* is the work *Untitled Rocket Launches* (2007). In this video installation, Wright uses the camera not as a tool to document, but as a means of experimentation. While the HMCS series privileges the subjective eye of the artist for image selection and framing, *Untitled Rocket Launches* assumes the viewpoint of the rocket – at once chaotic and methodical. The spiraling lens thrusts the viewer within and about an open space and yet familiar patterns appear. By juxtaposing these two bodies of work, curator **Chantal Rousseau** invites the viewer to examine the ways in which unpredictable and obscured imagery generates our own understanding of unseen and unfamiliar sites and events.

Official Hotel Sponsor



The Sutton Place Hotel

A summer party for *Survey*, featuring an exciting array of summer treats, will be held on Thursday, June 19 from 7 to 10 PM at Prefix Institute of Contemporary Art, located at 401 Richmond Street West, Suite 124, Toronto. The exhibition continues until July 26, 2008. Admission is free.

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Andrew Wright is an artist who lives and works in Waterloo, Canada. His work is described as multi-tiered inquiries into the nature of perception, photographic structures and technologies, and the ways we relate to an essentially mediated and primarily visual world. He has exhibited widely, both nationally and internationally, and has also participated in various residencies. In 2007, he was named a semi-finalist for the Sobey Art Award. Wright is represented in Canada by Peak Gallery (Toronto).

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Chantal Rousseau is an artist and arts administrator. Her practice includes painting, drawing, video and animation. She has exhibited in various artist-run centres and galleries and was a board member of YYZ Artists' Outlet from 1999–2003, where she curated the exhibitions *Trophy* (2001) and *Cenotaphs* (2003). She completed an MFA at the University of Guelph in 2005. She is currently the Operations Manager at Prefix Institute for Contemporary Art.

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 art.

For the loan of the works, Prefix gratefully acknowledges the artist and Peak Gallery (Toronto). For their support of *Survey*, Prefix acknowledges its Official Catering Sponsor, à la Carte Kitchen, and its Official Hotel Sponsor, the Sutton Place Hotel. Prefix also acknowledges the assistance of the Toronto Arts Council.

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

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