

---

**PRESS RELEASE**

**VIEW**

*the new contemporaries*

**Paul Bernhardt  
Eric Deis  
Chris Friesen  
Jeremy Herndl  
Yang Hong  
Anda Kubis  
Keer Tanchak  
Kerry Warner  
Jeroen Witvliet**

**Dec 18 – Jan 29 2011**



Winter 2010/2011 at the Elissa Cristall Gallery showcases the work of nine Canadian artists in an exhibition titled *VIEW the new contemporaries* (December 18- January 29, 2011). *VIEW* fuses nine points of view and stylistic perspectives akin to modern and postmodern tendencies: expressionism and abstraction connect with realism and minimalism. While the artists engage diversely with their respective mediums, including painting and photography, the show is cohesive through relational themes such as nature, femininity, urbanism, and public and private spaces.

The new contemporaries include photographer Eric Deis; his *Hipsters and Drug Dealer* evocative of the architectural dynamics and tensions inherent in the transitory urban expansion of Vancouver. Deis encapsulates the complexities that arise from real estate development at the historical Woodward's building signifying a shift in cultural demography and gentrification.

Deis reveals, "I photograph spaces, not literally as in the subject of the image, but rather the tangible and intangible elements, both physical and mental, which occupy them. We live within a network of relationships that are irreconcilable with each other and when they collide they produce spaces that possess multiple fragmented meanings. I capture these collisions, which often exist only for a fraction of a second, to create images that expose the agitation between social, economic, and natural forces."

In juxtaposition to the large format, in situ photographic style of Deis is artist Keer Tanchak who re contextualizes neo-Rococo 18th century subjectivity by way of dense pools of opaque paint upon aluminum cut out surfaces. Her work evokes humor through parodying the bourgeois, as in the case of *Bitchin*, whereby the opulent female subject sits almost collapsed; receding into the depths and density of her matte black modern kitchen.

Currently, Tanchak, derives inspiration from modern architectural and interior design sources and interjects her cast of characters from the 18th century into the contemporary imagery; merging these worlds and letting them coalesce. "Plain efficiency and complete frivolity motivate me when I paint. I work with aluminum for its smooth surface, neutral grey color, lightweight, and shine. It also allows me to cut my paintings to any shape the subject may dictate. I choose to look at Rococo imagery for the romantic, tragic figures in beautiful clothes, but I interpret specific 18th century painters because they provide a perfect and readily available template of this fairytale I've imagined since I was a child."

While Edmonton based artist, Paul Bernhardt reinvestigates the traditional landscape painting at distance; he points out the density of urban centres and gravitates towards the social context and structures of the contemporary environment. Pieces such as *Bela Lugosi's Dead* and *Power Struggle* reveal aspects of his process which commences with sketching, and according to the artist enables associations, memories and subjectivities to arise and inform the continual transformations and overall visual composites of each piece. "In the studio, I explore the properties of paint in a variety of ways...all combined to create a chaotic space that threatens to collapse into abstraction...as the means for creating a disconnect between subject and viewer that acts as allegory for our own tenuous relationship with the structures and mechanisms that occupy our environment...Ultimately the work explores the tensions between various oppositions: the natural and the synthetic, abstraction and representation, entropy and control."

*top left:* Paul Bernhardt, *Bela Lugosi's Dead*, oil on canvas, 67.5" x 87.5", 2010  
*right:* Eric Deis, *Hipsters and Drug Dealer*, archival pigment print, 63" x 50", 2006  
*below:* Keer Tanchak, *Oh no*, oil on aluminum, 14" x 20.5", 2010

