

Your Private Sky

VANESSA KWAN

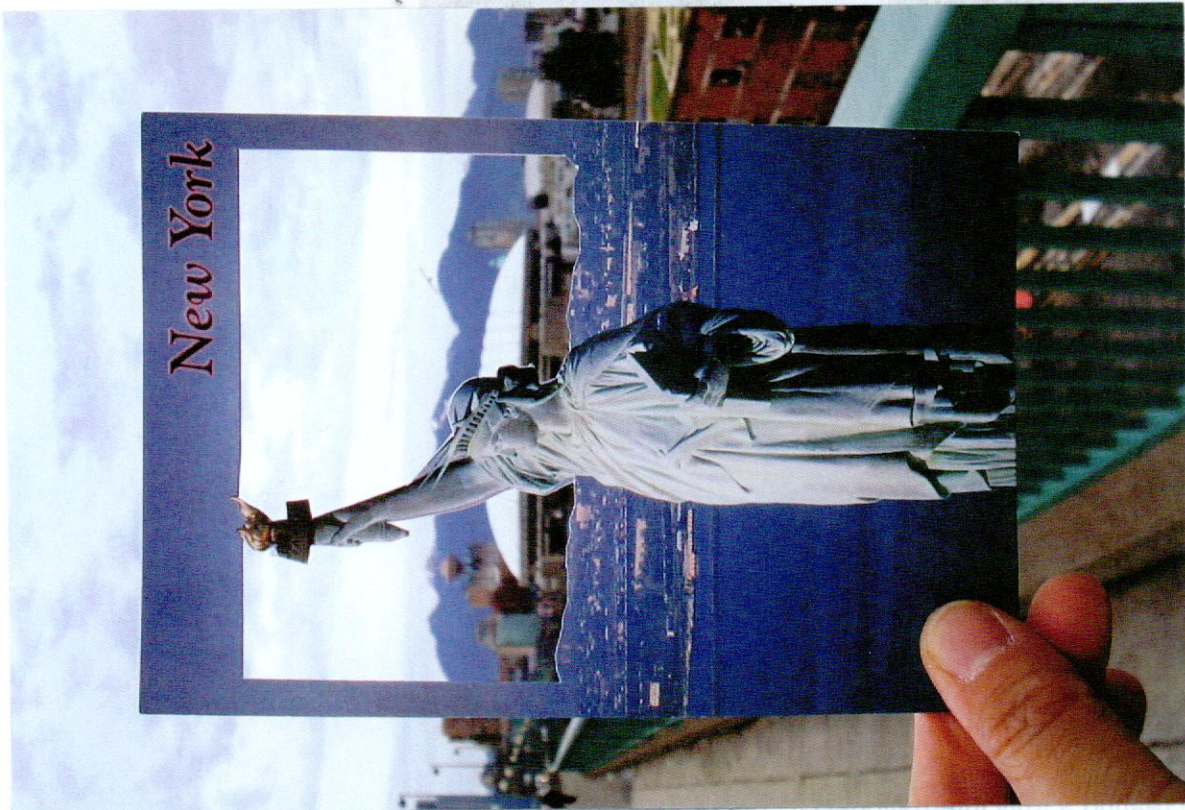
April 23 - May 21 2005

Opening Reception
April 22 2005, 8pm



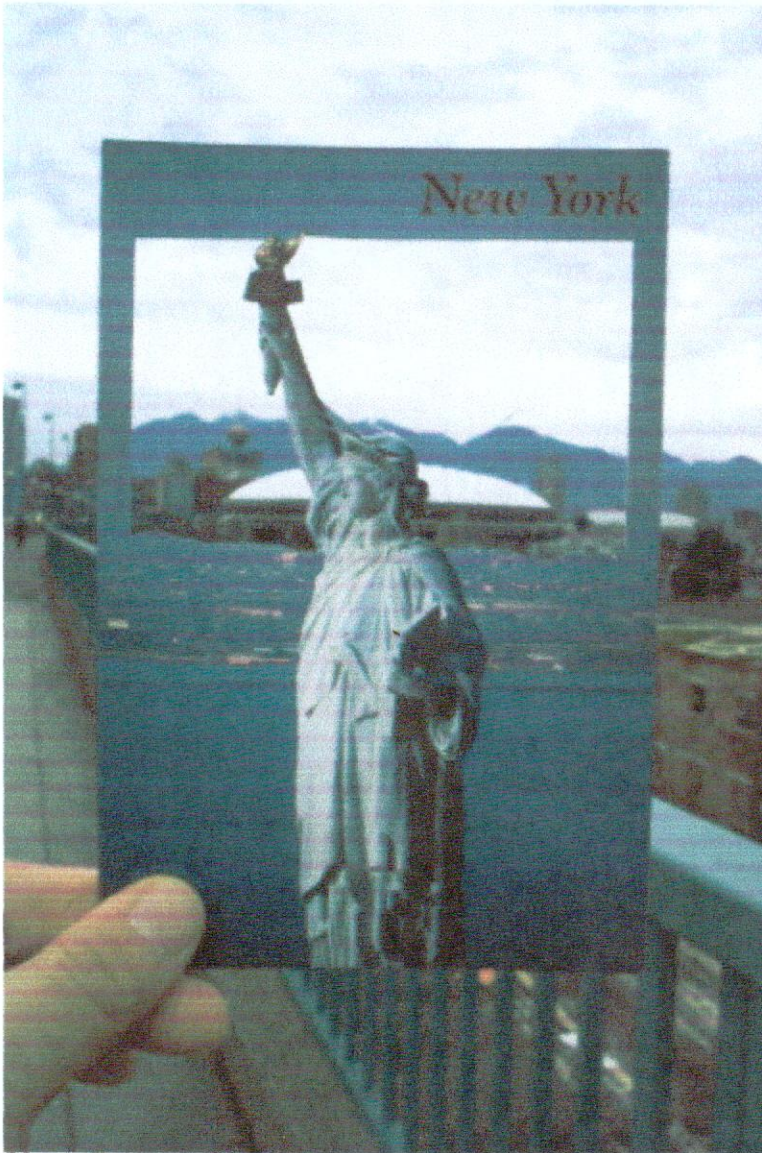
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The Or Gallery gratefully acknowledges support from the Canada Council for the Arts, the BC Gaming Commission, the Province of BC through the BC Arts Council, the City of Vancouver, and all of our volunteers. The Or Gallery is a member of the Pacific Association of Artist run centres.



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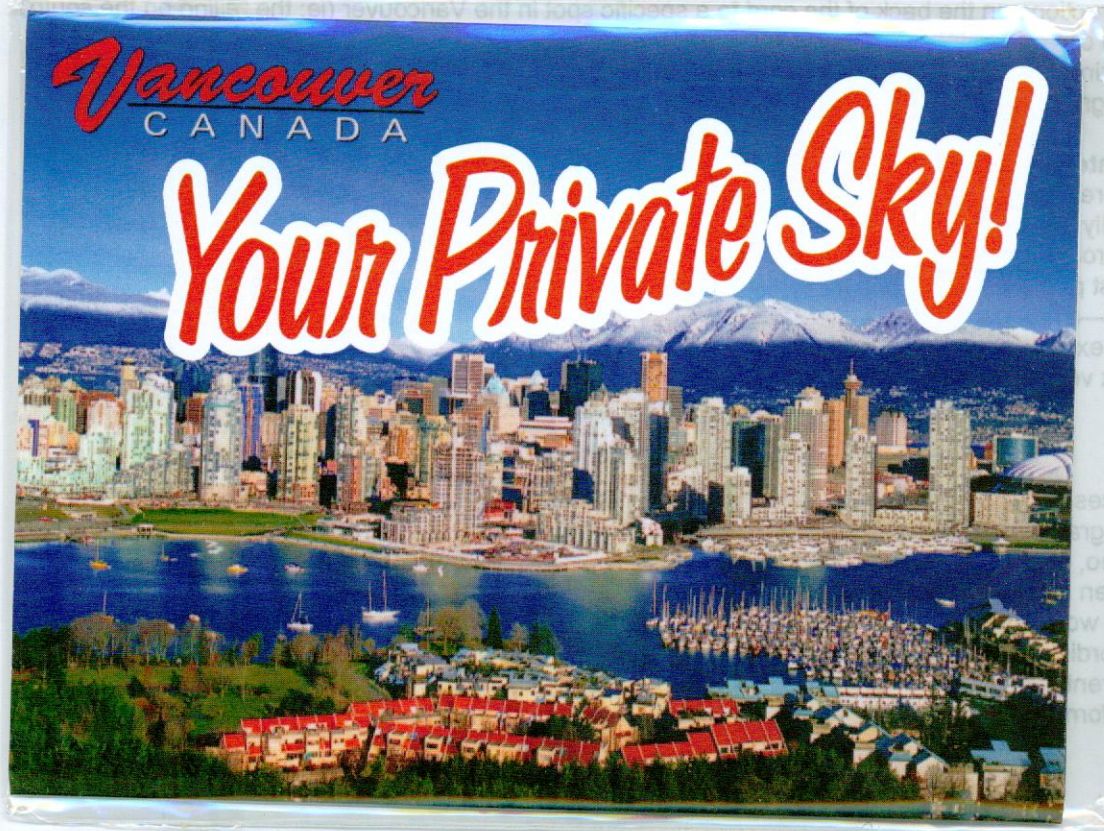


Your Private Sky 2005

Vanessa Kwan

Out of Office Reply: ***Your Private Sky*** April 22-May 21 2005
Artist talk April 30 2005

Kwan has created an artist edition of 250 books of postcards entitled ***Your Private Sky***. Perforations within international cities allow Vancouver to blend into their cityscapes creating a truly international city out of Vancouver. Kwan has also created a miniature cardboard replica of Science World as a sculptural component to her project.



VANESSA KWAN: YOUR PRIVATE SKY

Jeremy Todd

For the first time in history it is now possible to take care of everybody at a higher standard of living than any have ever known. Only ten years ago the 'more with less' technology reached the point where this could be done. All humanity now has the option to become enduringly successful. Buckminster Fuller, 1980

Vanessa Kwan's newest work has two components: a small-scale model of a geodesic dome placed inside the Or Gallery and a publication made up of a series of postcards. On the front of each postcard is a generic promotional image of a "world class" city. Tokyo, Toronto, Paris, and Hong Kong are some of the places included in the collection. A section within each image is perforated, allowing for easy removal and the creation of a kind of portable framing/viewing device. The work manages to take discussions of generic modernization, globalization, and the idea of the city into unusual and contested territories. Kwan's direct engagement with the work of Buckminster Fuller is uniquely pointed in

doing this. Fuller's insistence 25 years ago that collective technological emancipation was now available (from material hardship on a global scale) is irksome to anyone concerned with the common good today. If he and so many other internationalist thinkers of the post-war period were right, the current worldwide imbalance between abject poverty and concentrated wealth is a horrific failure of humanity and common sense. It is perhaps too tragic to properly comprehend. The cynical reasoning of our times attests to a mass recognition, no matter how repressed, of this tragedy.

Fuller is often represented as a quirky, but brilliant inventor – naïve, eccentric, and impractical. He was an advocate for the autonomy of the individual and the sustainability of common resources

throughout his activities as a mathematician, architect, and physicist (amongst other things). Despite this he is most commonly recognized in a very literal manner for his invention of the geodesic dome. For some, this dome represents the promise of scientific altruism despite the bomb. For most of us, however, it is a nostalgic and highly stylized icon for remembering/imagining when people tried to invent the future (Expo '67). His "less is more" technology contested the dominant forces of market rationalism because it consistently adhered to a humanitarian pragmatism – but this is rarely acknowledged in contemporary contexts.

Current representations of Marshall McLuhan, Fuller's famous, utopian generalist contemporary, are quite different. McLuhan's notion of the global village, media-centrism, and bold theoretical implosions of form and content are privileged as innovative and visionary by transnational corporate authorities today. McLuhan was invoked repeatedly (directly and indirectly) within a corporately financed contemporary

design exhibition called "Massive Change" that travelled to the Vancouver Art Gallery last year. A majority of the "problems" around the world that this exhibition proposed to solve were colonial and/or industrial in origin. Public criticism of "Massive Change" was directed at both the exclusion of socio-political and historical context from the exhibition's didactic narratives, and the repeated justification of military/industrial research and development to provide solutions for problems historically caused by military and industrial forces.

By referencing Fuller within the context of this work, Kwan points to an unfinished project that cannot be acculturated by the totality of capitalist relations (unlike the appropriation/recontextualization of McLuhan's work) or dismissed



YOUR PRIVATE SKY: VANESSA KWAN, APRIL 23 TO MAY 21, 2005

as "ideological" within this totality. A rupture is made in the reference that makes visible the illusory naturalization of what constitutes "the international" when such a term is defined by liquid capital. Before I started writing about this new work for the Or Gallery, Kwan sent me an image involving a New York City postcard included in the *Your Private Sky* collection. In this picture the perforated section of the postcard is removed. The Statue of Liberty stands surrounded by a hole left above the NYC skyline. A hand holds up the postcard, framing a view of downtown Vancouver and the North Shore as seen from the Cambie Street Bridge. Lady Liberty overlaps with GM Place and the main downtown branch of the Vancouver Public Library. Signs of place in situ and in representations co-mingle and negate any possibility of a hierarchical relationship. What is there in reality to "authenticate" any of it? What is the point in such a question when the icons of place have

no pretence of a referent?

The picture conveys so much with so little. The seemingly antagonistic relationship between what is "real" and what is simulated becomes hyper-conflated, or rather, this hyper-conflation as it exists in the everyday is made poignantly visible. The "common ground" of the city is at once a public spectacle and a private theatre of ownership and subjection. If and when the world is one city (a fortress – an empire of simulated difference) how do we comprehend the idea of somewhere else, or something else? What is privately yours? Where is the referent? *Your Private Sky* plays with the idea of "being international" – of being "world-class" – as it is defined by authorities of perception involved in (or wanting involvement in) the maintenance and control of a global political economy indifferent to the scrutiny, needs, and lived experiences of existing communities.

Jeremy Todd is a Vancouver-based artist, teacher, musician, and director/curator of the Helen Pitt Gallery.

LISTENING AND CONSCIOUSNESS: REFLECTIONS INSPIRED BY THE MUSIC OF JEFFREY ALLPORT AND TIM OLIVE

Igor Santizo

<<http://www.orgallery.org/listening.html>>

WE INTERPRET WHAT WE HEAR ACCORDING TO THE WAY WE LISTEN.

Pauline Oliveros, 1999

THERE'S A NEW BEARD IN TOWN

Got a gallery...

- ...in your pocket?
- ...on your shoe?
- ...on your beard?
- ...in the trunk of your car?
- ...inside your trench coat?
- ...on the nails of your hand?
- ...in your backpack?
- ...in a caravan?

I am seeking contributions for an archive of MOBILE GALLERY SPACES. The project will be completed through the support of a residency entitled Out of Office Reply, organized by the Or Gallery in Vancouver, BC, Canada. Following the opening reception on May 7, 2005, the archive will be exhibited as a web project, hosted on the Or Gallery website, www.orgallery.org.

This project can be used as a means to launch the mobile gallery space you want to start-up or the one you invented/hosted years ago. The web site will act as a network between spaces and artists providing information about past and ongoing projects. Artists and galleries will be credited for all material used.

The archive hopes to collect info about each project, such as:

- details and images regarding past shows, projects and programming
- diagrams, sketches and/or floor plans, of your space
- ongoing calls for proposals/submissions
- details regarding the type of work, audience and administration that are particular to your space/project
- stories, ideas and strategies
- current contact info for the space and/or hosting artist

Welcoming any interpretations of what constitutes a "mobile gallery space," the function/location of a gallery and galleries that may verge on: performance, art-vending projects, special events, site-specific works, reinvented spaces, roving shows, guerilla installations, home-made museums, web sites, etc.

PLEASE, PLEASE take the time to send me info regarding yours, or someone else's gallery. Looking for work from Canada and around the world including other similar archives that may exist. All detailed leads and/or partial scraps of information welcome.

Can't wait to hear from you,
Hannah
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