

**nicole + ryan: Sister, Sister**

June 24 through July 22, 2006

**OIR Gallery**, Tuesday – Saturday 12pm – 5pm  
T. 604. 683.7395 For the duration of the exhibition, the newly  
designated *OIR Gallery* will be located at 882 East Hastings. Join  
us for a closing event on July 21, from 6 to 9pm.

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## Sister, Sister

O!R gallery  
882 East Hastings Street,  
Vancouver, BC  
V6A 1R6  
CANADA

*Sister, Sister* originates out of the artist collaboration nicole + ryan imagining a sister city relationship between Omaha and Vancouver based on their recent trajectory between the two cities. Invited by the Bemis Center for the Contemporary Arts to perform an artist residency the couple lived in Omaha, Nebraska for a period of three months. There, they initiated a series of works that investigate issues pertaining to site specificity, cultural mobility, and urbanism while considering the function of artist-in-residence programs as makers of place and the artists as international delegates. The American popularization of the Sister city program in the mid 50s remains an interesting historical event given its stress on creating relationships between citizens of the world as a safeguard against regressive nationalisms.

For this exhibition the artists requested the temporary relocation of the Or gallery to their live/work studio on Hastings Street in order to further their ideas regarding site specificity. The gallery has also been renamed the O!R gallery for the duration of exhibition as an amalgamation of the Omaha tourism logo (O!) and the Or gallery proper.

The show is conceptualized as having several distinct but related components with the first room containing a series of documents from Omaha and the second or back room a Vancouver produced installation originating in our research while living in the American city. One of the first people we met in Omaha was Nicole Crawford, a gift shop employee from the Joslyn museum in Omaha. Quite naturally we asked about the Stan Douglas exhibition *Inconsolable Memories*, which had been exhibited at the museum the previous Spring. Our conversation sparked an interest in making a video, *After work at the Goofy Foot*, based on her memory of the exhibition/artist talk as we had missed the show in both cities based on our own itinerary.

*Rest Stop* was a painted sign on the roof of the Bemis Center with the "REST STOP" text measuring 10' x 75'. The installation emerged out of our reading into the SITE art and architecture group who had proposed a road-based text piece using "REST STOP" for a nearby section of the I-80 interstate highway in the mid 70s. The rooftop realization of the never completed SITE proposal reworks the audience from that of the automobile to one associated with flight while implicating the proliferation of artist residency programs within the larger context of globalization.

*second storey, retold* is comprised of a vinyl design on 6 windows based on the decorative security bars from our Hastings Street studio. The vinyl was installed on the second floor windows of our live/work studio in Omaha for the duration of the residency and the windows left when we did. Installed back in our studio the objects can be reconsidered in a context where the design is continually recast in dynamic shadow play on the walls throughout the day by passing traffic reflecting the sunlight into the semi-darkened space. Following the removal of the windows from the Omaha studio we also found a mouldy towel functioning as insulation from the draft.

The Vancouver produced installation is titled *Revuocnav (a boat, two buckets, and enough rope to hang yourself)* and was conceived as an ironic extension of the logic followed by Omaha's Knights of Ak-Sar-Ben, a civic booster/business group started in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century whose purpose was to transform the rough and tumble city of Omaha into a cultured destination. An early exploit by the Knights was to host a State Fair modeled on the popular New Orleans Mardi Gras festival. The concerned Omahans went as far as to secure the actual Mardi Gras floats for their own event. Our inverted 'float' takes Johnny Schnarr's (an infamous West coast smuggler during prohibition) fastest rum running boat, the Revuocnav (Vancouver spelled backwards), as its parallel model. The live/work installation is built off of our bed frame and designates issues of cultural autonomy, gentrification, and beneficent illegality as integral to the ongoing construction of culture in contemporary society.

nicole + ryan  
2006