



'Development and Desire'

an installation by

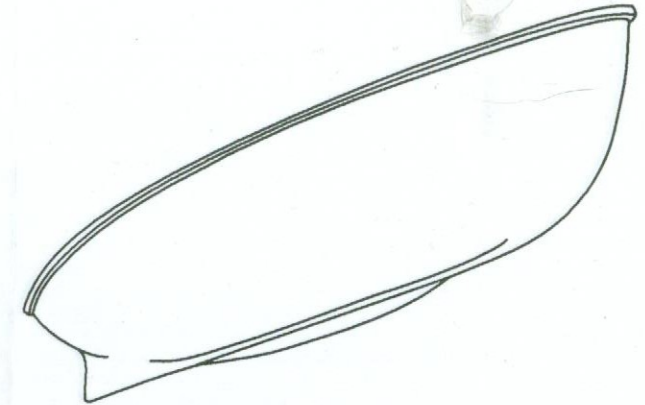
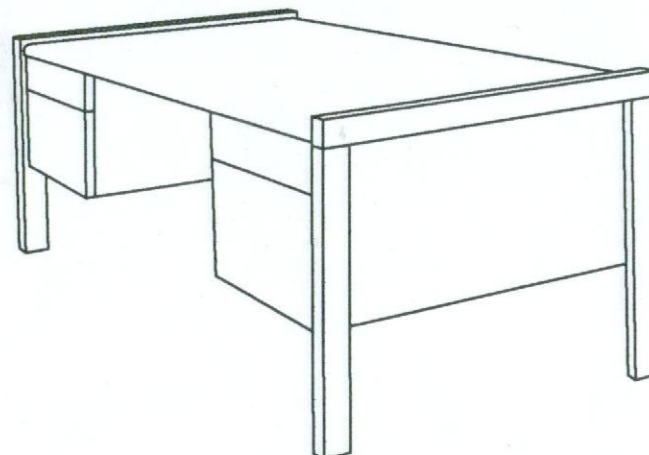
**MICHAEL
BANWELL**

January 15 to February 12, 1994
Opening Saturday, 2 to 6pm
Artist Talk: January 29, 2pm

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Michael Banwell is building an administrative office within the Or Gallery. Banwell's constructed space includes fabricated oak panel walls, an administrator's chair and desk, a hand-made row boat, two windows with a view and brass coloured letters which read 'Development and Desire'. Is this the office of a government agency, a forest company or an environmental organization?

Banwell carefully chose the words 'development' and 'desire' to accurately reflect two views of the way many Canadians value nature. There is the view that the value of nature is in its 'development' for industrial production and profit and the view that nature, due to our 'desire' for untouched landscape, can be 'developed' for its recreational and wilderness values. The words 'development' and 'desire' not only identify opposing positions but are also interchangeable. There exists the patriarchal 'desire' for dominion over nature. Also,



increasingly there are shifts away from industrial models towards the 'development' of sustainable resource models.

Michael Banwell is a professional artist and art school instructor. He has been a community activist for some years, often making art projects that deal with neighbourhood issues. His current work investigates those areas where social constructs and culture intersect. The artist's publication, which is free to visitors, has been created as a component of this installation.

Banwell will be giving an artist talk at the gallery on Saturday, January 29 at 2pm.

Development

Installation: "DEVELOPEMENT AND DESIRE" for the OR Gallery, Vancouver, B.C.

Upon entering the gallery the viewer sees a free standing temporary structure of metal studs and wall board 16 feet by 12 feet in plan by 8 feet high, with a 15 foot row boat suspended above, its oars extended.

The viewer approaches a doorway into what appears to be an office, above the doorway a sign in brass letters reads "DEVELOPEMENT AND DESIRE".

The doorway, trimmed in oak, frames a view of a large, rosewood executive desk in the middle of the room. The desk is oriented to face the viewer with an executive chair behind.

On the wall behind the desk is a large, framed road map of British Columbia.

There are two kinds of publications on the desk, a number are annual reports from the forest and mining industry, the other, a number of issues of Beautiful British Columbia.

Barely audible sound is apparent both to the left and right of the viewer.

The viewer looks right and sees a large window framing a sun dappled forest floor accompanied by the muffled sound of birds and wind rustling in the forest outside.

A muffled loon call is heard from behind, the viewer looks over her/his shoulder to the source, seeing an identical office window to the left of the desk, with a view out over a sunny uninhabited lake.

Overhead the large hand crafted rowboat hovers just out of reach, its oars poised.

The office seems momentarily suspended in a place where nature prevails, as yet untouched, the object of desire.

On the inside walls either side of the office doorway are other maps, Ministry of Forests resource maps, a Seirra club map, a Geological Survey map, a Ministry of Parks and recreation map and a Western Wilderness Committee map, and on.....

Is this the office of a forestry company, a government agency or an environmental conservation organization.